An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Durrow Preschool 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Ballybought</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Durrow</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tullamore</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Offaly</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>16OY0110</td>
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Date of Inspection: 15-01-2019
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>15-01-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>Interaction with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with setting owner</td>
<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of interactions during the two morning ECCE sessions</td>
<td>Post-inspection feedback meeting with setting owner and ECCE practitioners</td>
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CONTEXT OF SETTING

Durrow Preschool has been in operation in Durrow, Co. Offaly for over fifteen years. The setting moved to the new purpose built premises in September 2016. There are two pre-school rooms in the building where the owner/manager provides care and education for local children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The children are allocated to different rooms according to their age and stage of development. On the day of the inspection, both rooms were visited as part of the inspection process. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report, and the response submitted on behalf of the setting can 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.
- A very welcoming atmosphere is evident as parents and children arrive to the setting. The practitioners warmly greet all families and discuss occasions and events. Parents are encouraged to come into the setting and settle their children into the play areas.
- There is a consistent routine in the setting which children are familiar with and enjoy participating in. Children have many opportunities during the daily routine to make independent decisions and choices, and to engage in free-choice play.
- Transitions between activities are instant; a review of this approach to transitions is merited. Snack time is a social occasion and the children sit with their friends during this period discussing play and interests. Most children are independent during snack time and have good self-help skills which are effectively supported.
- There are various displays which support individual identity within the setting. The practitioners have created displays including height charts, birthday displays and family pictures. The practitioners have explored the topic of road safety to support their walks with the children around the local area. The locations visited during these walks are currently not reflected in the environment.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the practitioners use displays and props to support the children’s awareness of transitions in the daily routine. This will support them to prepare for transitions, to conclude their activities in a more gradual and phased manner and to clean up and prepare for the next activity in a more efficient manner.
- To promote identity and belonging further, it is advised that practitioners emphasise the defining features of the local community throughout the pre-school environment, as well as the various locations that the children are aware of and visit.
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 curriculum is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and a play-based curriculum is evident in the daily activities and experiences.
- Curriculum plans are organised with medium-term and short-term planning in place. Planning currently focuses on learning goals and themes. There are distinct planning processes for the two-year ECCE cycle ensuring children have varied and age appropriate experiences. The planning processes are active in the learning environment as some records of child’s interests are evident. The practitioners provide verbal information regarding the children’s emergent interests and how they facilitate these interests; these interests could be included in the written documentation.
- The practitioners use learning stories for observations. These assessments document the future plans for children and link to *Aistear*. The practitioners also complete an individual scrapbook for each child which contains photographs and anecdotal notes; there is potential to extend the use of this document further.
- Play is the main medium for learning with extensive time given to children to allow them to pursue their interest and to persist with challenge. Children enjoy returning to their chosen activity to continue to extend and explore their ideas and concepts. On the day of the inspection a group of children enjoyed playing together to build a train track and cooperated with each other to design the length and shape of the track.
- The outdoor environment is created with natural materials and offers the children an extensive range of opportunities to develop their imagination and gross motor skills. The indoor environments offer various interest areas and have a good range of resources. The indoor environments have potential to offer further experiences to the children.
- The practitioners are good play partners with the children and support learning and exploration. The practitioners also guide the problem solving process for children in the group.
- Practitioners include elements of language, literacy and numeracy throughout the morning to support children’s understanding of these concepts. To nurture their understanding further, the children would benefit from opportunities to access, explore and engage with further resources.
- The setting provides an inclusive environment with a strong focus on supporting children with additional needs. There is a written policy to support this practice. Children with additional needs have access to the Access and Inclusion support (AIM) and the manager has completed Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) in the Early Years programme.

*Actions advised*

- Practitioners are advised to broaden their assessment and planning approaches to capture a more holistic view of the children’s emergent interests. This will support the setting to document observations about the children’s learning, to use photographs as a source of information about the child, and to share information with parents. A specific focus on skills, dispositions and attitudes of the children will enhance the planning and observation records within the setting also.
- The practitioners are advised to review the layout of the indoor environments and to create well defined interest areas. When reviewing each interest area, the practitioners should consider the extension of resources to support numeracy and literacy. This will ensure that children have more focused learning experiences within their learning environment.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The children have fun in the setting and demonstrate a keen interest in learning and exploring.
- The setting offers children a well-resourced and organised outdoor environment created with natural materials. There is lots of outdoor space where children can develop their gross motor skills and engage in risky play. On the day of the inspection the children enjoyed climbing tyres and bird watching outdoors.
• The book area is used throughout the day and the children enjoy the opportunity to freely choose to read books. Practitioners are aware of the children’s interest in books. They offer support in reading books and discussing pictures and words within the stories.
• Songs and rhymes are planned for within the daily routine and children enjoy singing songs and using props and dramatic effects.
• The practitioners ask a variety of open and closed questions throughout the day. There is a focus on asking testing questions linked to the topic of the week. This form of interaction limits the extent to which the children’s imagination and vocabulary can be developed.
• The children have access to sensory exploration and messy play. On the day of the inspection children engaged with playdough, stones, leaves, and water. There is a sensory room in the setting; this offers the children a quiet and calming atmosphere where they can explore different senses and avail of more one-to-one support.
• Throughout the inspection process children were observed to play individually, in pairs and in small groups. There were some occasions where large group learning also took place. The practitioners used this activity to extend and develop the children’s gross motor skills and coordination. The children enjoyed dancing and using their imagination to act out animals and creatures.
• The practitioners have significantly reduced the use of templates and they are working to eliminate their use completely from the setting. There are extensive displays of individual creative art and children have open access to art materials.

Action advised
• Practitioners are advised to extend the use of open-ended questions and commenting and to scaffold the children’s learning to a greater extent by prompting them to elaborate on their thoughts, feelings and ideas and to make connections with their previous learning and knowledge. This will help to optimise the daily learning and development opportunities and deepen the children’s learning and knowledge.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING
• The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
• There is a professional working ethos evident in the setting.
• There is a good sense of teamwork in the setting and the owner delegates various tasks and responsibilities to the ECCE practitioners. The practitioners work well together as a team to optimise the learning and development for the children in their care.
• The manager is a good leader and role model. She has created a positive work environment where the ECCE practitioners are supported to learn and extend their knowledge.
• The ECCE team have a clear vision for the setting and are currently focusing on developing and reviewing the observation processes. All practitioners participate in continued professional development relevant to their work and the needs of the children in their care. They also engage in compulsory training as required.
• There are regular staff meetings held where the curriculum is planned and any issues of concern are discussed. The practitioners are aware of the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide from various training events attended and they plan to use it for future development projects in the setting.
• There is a range of communication channels established with parents in the setting: the children’s individual scrapbooks are sent home, photographs of the children are sent to their parents by text message on a daily basis and there are daily informal conversations. There is an annual concert at the end of the year which parents and family members attend. There is potential to extend parental involvement in the setting.
• The children’s transition to primary school is supported by a visit from the school principal. The school is located next door to the setting and therefore the children are familiar with the building and they see their siblings and friends across the wall. The practitioners and manager encourage parents to share key information with their child’s new class teacher to ensure a smooth transition to primary school.
**Action advised**

- It is advised that the manager and practitioners extend parental involvement within the setting, particularly in relation to curriculum implementation. Parental involvement in setting developments will also support the experiences of the children. The *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* pillar of practice ‘Partnership with Parents’ will be useful in this regard.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The capacity of the setting to continue to implement the actions advised above is very good. The owner and practitioner communicate well with each other and work together for the interests of the children.
## 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>
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<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Very good</td>
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## Language used in Early-Years Education 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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Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

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

Since the inspection we have displayed information on our community and photos of all the places the children have visited in the community. We have invited parents and family to the setting to show and tell about life as a young child and on their jobs. We had a great response from grandparents also.

We have sent the children's learning journals home for parents to look over and comment on during Easter break. We have rearranged the rooms into more defined areas of learning and have changed materials and equipment in each area to promote interests and change to the children's learning needs. We are applying more open-ended questions to scaffold and extend the children's learning.