# Early Years Education Inspection Report

## Setting Name
Nicole’s Country Childcare

## Setting Address
Skehana  
Roscrea  
County Tipperary

## DCYA number
16TY0016

Date of Inspection: 14-10-2018
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>14-10-2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>Interaction with the children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with the setting owner/ manager</td>
<td>Review of relevant setting documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory meeting with practitioners</td>
<td>Review of records of the children’s learning and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of interactions during the morning session</td>
<td>Feedback to the setting owner/ manager and practitioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of educational facilities and resources</td>
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CONTEXT OF SETTING

Nicole’s Country Childcare is a private full day, sessional pre-school and after-school setting. It is located on the outskirts of Roscrea in a domestic dwelling. There is a large natural outdoor area available. This settings’ staff team includes a number of family members working alongside additional employed practitioners. In the room observed, there were a number of siblings in the mixed-aged group. On the day of the inspection, the owner/ lead practitioner, an assistant practitioner and twenty children were present in the pre-school room. 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 very warm and caring atmosphere in the setting. A homely climate has been successfully established.
- There were friendly interactions between the practitioners, the children and their families during arrival and departure times.
- The practitioners consistently demonstrate respect and positive regard for the children. A key person approach which involves each practitioner having responsibility for a dedicated group of children has not yet been established.
- The practitioners model positive behaviour and provide frequent gentle reminders to guide the children’s behaviour within a positive and supportive environment. They respond positively to the children’s efforts and achievements.
- At the time of the inspection, very good opportunities were provided for children to make decisions about their learning in the outdoor environment. This was less evident in the indoor environment.
- The snack time is a social occasion where the practitioners and children sit and talk together sharing fruit. This promotes well-being and a healthy lifestyle effectively.
- Children’s identity and belonging are suitably fostered through curricular activities and visual displays. The practitioners build their understanding of community through visits from the local Gardaí and other relevant personnel.
- Regular opportunities are provided for parents to spend time with the children. These valuable experiences promote the sharing of skills and knowledge about their parents’ lives and professions.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to introduce a key person approach to complement the secure relationships which they have with the children.
- It is advised that the children be further enabled and encouraged to be active agents in their learning by making decisions and choices about activities.
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 curriculum is suitably informed by a play-based approach to learning and to a lesser degree by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- The practitioners organise learning activities that are based on monthly themes and seasonal events. The emergent interests of children were reflected by the practitioners on a few instances in their approach to planning.
- The practitioners carefully track each child’s progress across eight curricular topics, such as literacy, mathematics, communication and physical activity. Meaningful information is noted on children’s learning dispositions, skills and understanding. These observations are not shared with parents.
- The practitioners value learning through play. At the time of the inspection, practitioners initiated and led the majority of playful activities during the three hour session.
- The indoor learning environment is neatly arranged with materials and displays reflecting current seasonal themes such as Halloween and Autumn. It was noted that children's recent art work mostly consisted of template-based activities.
- The outdoor learning environment offers children appropriate opportunities to explore and move using their gross-motor skills in a large natural space and smaller tarmac area. These spaces effectively enable child-led risk-taking, problem-solving, investigation and use of imagination.
- The practitioners read to children and engage them in singing on a daily basis. Song time was led by the owner playing a guitar and all children were actively engaged in the choir. This activity contributes greatly to children’s language development.
- The practitioners effectively engage and support children using soft tones. They use a wide range of vocabulary during interactions. Good use is made of comments and open-ended questions to extend children’s learning and conversation.

*Actions advised*

- Practitioners are advised to refresh their knowledge and understanding of Aistear to better inform curriculum delivery. The use of the materials within the Curriculum Foundations section of the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide will support this action.
- It is advised that children’s emergent interests be regularly included to strengthen planning for individual needs.
- Practitioners are advised to provide a greater balance between child-initiated and adult-initiated activities.

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 demonstrate that they are happy and secure in the setting.
- Overall, the children display good engagement in their learning experiences. In the outdoors, children enjoy the freedom to follow interests and experience deep involvement.
- At the time of the inspection, the children did not have regular opportunities to reflect on their learning.
- The children are developing control and confidence over their physical skills. They have completed a six week programme using balance bikes in fun activities that helped develop gross motor skills, spatial awareness, and bilateral co-ordination.
- There is a strong emphasis on engaging the children in experiences which support the development of social skills. They engage in suitable activities that build understanding and facilitate helping others, being a friend and turn taking.
- The children capably manage their self-care needs. They are encouraged to independently put on their outdoor clothing and footwear.
During the inspection, the majority of art experiences involved colouring-in sheets and templates.

The children confidently communicate with each other and the practitioners. Commendably, they explore sound, pattern, rhythm and repetition in language.

The children show a positive understanding of their identity as members of their families. Opportunities to meet their siblings enhances their sense of belonging.

Very good experiences build the children’s awareness of the natural environment. They use books and other materials to understand seasonal changes and broaden their knowledge of the world.

**Actions advised**

- Practitioners are advised to develop opportunities for children to build an awareness of their developing capabilities by regularly discussing and sharing their learning achievements.
- It is advised that the use of template-based art activities be greatly reduced. Practitioners need to provide opportunities which allow children to express themselves creatively using art materials which focus more on process and individual expression.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The owner/lead practitioner and the assistant practitioner demonstrate a very good capacity for reflection. They meet daily to consider the experiences of children and maintain a reflective diary on curriculum implementation.
- The use of quality frameworks for the purpose of systematic self-review and professional reflection has yet to take place.
- A strong ethic of teamwork has been established. Both practitioners display clarity around their roles and responsibilities. They work closely with the wider staff team to promote high standards in care and education.
- The practitioners respect parents and value their partnership in the setting. It is common for practitioners to make visits to the children’s home in an effort to smooth the transition into the setting.
- Regular informal sharing of information about children’s learning and achievements takes place through conversations and photographs. At the time of the inspection, documented observations about children's progress were not shared with parents.
- As children prepare to move from the Toddler Room, parents are consulted and staff communicate about strengths and needs.
- The practitioners support children to transition to primary school through curricular activities that promote an understanding of school life. They are considering ways to sensitively share information with local schools to ensure continuity.

**Actions advised**

- It is advised that self-review processes be put in place to enhance professional reflection. The practitioners are advised to use the *Aistear Siolta Practice Guide*. This will support their self-assessments, help them to devise improvement plans and record the outcomes of their improvement initiatives.
- Practitioners are advised to regularly share records about children's progress with parents.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The capacity of the service to implement the actions advised above is very good. This was demonstrated by the owner/manager and staff’s commitment to ongoing quality improvement.
## 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>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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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</tbody>
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