

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Mini World Preschool
Setting Address	Ballinacarrow Ballymote County Sligo
DCYA number	17SO0127

Date of Inspection: 11-10-2019



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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 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	11-10-2019
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interaction with the children• Review of relevant documents• Feedback to the setting owner
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with the setting owner/sole practitioner• Observation of interactions during one pre-school session	

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Mini World is a privately owned pre-school and after-school setting which is located on the grounds of a primary school in Ballinacarrow, County Sligo. Curriculum provision is informed by *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. On the day of the inspection, there was one owner/lead practitioner and eight children present. A post-inspection feedback meeting was held with the setting owner. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report; a response was not received from the setting.

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.
- The manager is highly responsive and sensitive to the needs of the children in her care. She creates a warm, affirming atmosphere in the setting through her gentle interactions with the children.
- A visual routine highlights the various daily activities. This visual prompt is not used to maximum effect to support transitions and the children's awareness of the structure of the day.
- The children are active agents in the pre-school and have numerous opportunities to choose their preferred areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors.
- The children enjoy talking to their peers and sharing personal stories at snack-time. This time is used effectively to encourage the children's self-help skills and independence. There were missed opportunities during the remainder of the session to further support the children's autonomy.
- The manager demonstrates a positive regard for the children and their families. A lovely personalised conversation, supported by photographs of each child's family home as discussion prompts, occurred during the inspection.
- Many connections have been established between the pre-school and the local community. In addition, opportunities are provided that broaden the children's knowledge of the wider world. An annual visit from the Garda supporting Road Safety Week occurred during the inspection.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the manager utilises the established visual daily routine to support the development of additional transition strategies that will prepare the children for changes in the activities.
- It is advised that further strategies are developed to promote the children's independence and self-help skills throughout the session. Introducing a visual rota for helper roles will support this practice.

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 manager demonstrates an awareness of an emergent approach to curriculum provision and frequently plans to extend the children's interests. Some links are made to the *Aistear* goals. Currently, the children's observed learning needs are not used to inform planning. Evaluations of the activities provided for the children are not conducted.
- Snapshot observations are used frequently to record the children's learning. An electronic application is used to collate and share photographs of the children engaged in activities with parents. The photographs will subsequently be used to create detailed observations. The sharing of electronic observations of the children's learning has not yet commenced.
- There are some defined areas of play in the indoor learning environment. The manager has made efforts to provide some authentic resources in the kitchen area while natural materials such as wooden blocks and cardboard tubes are available to extend play. The small-world farm generates interest from the children during the session.
- The outdoor area provides many opportunities for the children to engage in sensorial and explorative play. A mud kitchen with utensils, tyres with gravel, bark and tree stumps are all accessible for the children to use. There is scope to provide a wider range of well-resourced, creative, authentic and language-rich materials, both indoors and outdoors.
- There are high quality, playful interactions between the manager and the children. Opportunities are maximised to promote the children's mathematical language, higher order thinking and to extend their vocabulary.
- The manager knows the children extremely well and is highly responsive and respectful of their diverse temperaments and needs.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the practitioner develops a system to support the recording of regular observations of the children's learning to inform the planning of activities that will progress the children's interests and learning needs. Making meaningful links to the learning goals of *Aistear*, in addition to the frequent inclusion of the children's contributions to planning and assessment and those of their parents, will strengthen assessment practices further.
- It is advised that the practitioner evaluates and develops the indoor and outdoor learning environments to provide a wider range of well-resourced, creative, authentic and language-rich experiences.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements very good.
- The children are motivated when creating pictures at the art-table, when playing collaboratively with the small-world toys such as cars and when exploring a muddy puddle outside. They engage and sustain interest in their play as their requests are accommodated frequently by the manager.
- The majority of children demonstrate a growing awareness and appreciation of their individuality as they confidently share stories and ideas during the session.
- Some children are developing an understanding of mathematical concepts. They experience success as they test the properties of a variety of objects in the large muddy puddle to determine if they float or sink.
- A well-narrated group learning story is displayed for the children to observe and to appreciate their learning experiences. Currently, the children do not have access to their individual observations or a variety of stories of their learning activities in the pre-school setting.
- The children are developing an awareness of the local community and the wider world. During the inspection they actively explored the *Garda* car and the equipment used to assist with the role of the traffic corps. They have had an opportunity to write to a partner pre-school in Aberdeen.

- Most children are developing the ability to play co-operatively with some lovely examples demonstrated of peer help and empathy. Other children require frequent adult support to control their emotions and to prompt turn taking.
- The children have many opportunities to broaden their understanding of the world using books, activities and discussions. Currently, they are actively monitoring the life cycle of a caterpillar in the pre-school room. Each year, during the growing season they plant seeds and bulbs.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the children have access to their individual scrapbooks that highlight their evolving interests and learning progression through photographs, art and documented observations. The addition of regular annotations of the children's voices to their creative work will create a unique record of each child's learning.
- It is advised that children are supported to develop appropriate social skills through discussions around the areas of emotions and feelings and by becoming aware of the boundaries of play.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The manager has recently completed the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) Programme which encouraged reflection and evaluation of practice using the *Aistear, Síolta, Practice Guide*. There is scope to create consistent opportunities for reflection on practice to occur.
- The manager has previously availed of mentoring support from the county childcare committee and has contacted various professionals seeking support for children with additional needs.
- Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting and are involved in many walks and outings with the pre-school. They receive regular photographs and information about pre-school activities through various electronic applications. A notice board for parents is displayed.
- A visit to the pre-school session to familiarise the prospective children and their families with the manager, other children and the pre-school environment, supports the settling-in process. Parents receive pre-school policies and procedures electronically to inform them about the day-to-day organisation of the setting.
- The manager organises a visit for the children to the adjacent primary school to support the transition process. The children meet the junior infant class and teacher to support their familiarity with the school. There are no formal opportunities provided to meet with parents to discuss the children's learning and overall development prior to the transition to primary school.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the manager engages in the systematic review and evaluation of practice based on current research and resources in the *Aistear, Síolta, Practice Guide*.
- It is advised that the manager develops a formal process to support the children's transition to primary school. Meeting with the parents prior to the end of the year and sharing a summary of each child's learning with them based on the *Aistear* themes and subsequently with the junior infant teacher, with parental permission will support this action.

Summary of Overall Inspection

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	Very Good
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	Very Good
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	Very Good
Quality of management and leadership for learning	Very Good

Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

Excellent	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.
Very good	Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.
Good	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.
Fair	Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.
Poor	Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.

