

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<b>Setting Name</b>	Millie's Playschool
<b>Setting Address</b>	Knockananna Ardnaboy Arklow County Wicklow
<b>DCYA number</b>	19WW0330

**Date of Inspection: 21-01-2020**



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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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	22-01-2020
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interaction with children</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Feedback to setting owner/practitioner</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with setting owner/practitioner</li><li>• Observation of interactions during the pre-school session</li></ul>	

### CONTEXT OF SETTING

Millie's Playschool was established in 2019. This private setting is located in the rural village of Ardnaboy, Co. Wicklow. The setting provides a morning sessional service for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, the owner/practitioner and six children were present. The owner/practitioner attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report, and the response of the setting will 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.
- The practitioner has successfully created a very relaxed and homely atmosphere. She greets the children and their families warmly on arrival.
- The children enter the setting eagerly and select from a range of activities and learning experiences.
- Interactions between the practitioner and the children are very caring and respectful. The practitioner positions herself at the children's level when interacting with the children. She uses calm and even tones consistently when talking to them and listens attentively.
- The children's identity and belonging are effectively supported through a number of photographic displays. Their names and photographs are prominently displayed throughout the setting. The practitioner has yet to include photographs of the children's families in the learning room.
- The practitioner successfully promotes the children's independence. The children actively participate in daily tasks, including putting snacks in the fridge and tidying up after activities. They also manage their own self-care needs, such as hand-washing and putting on their coats, with confidence.
- The practitioner provides the children with specific and meaningful feedback, such as 'That was very kind of you', and 'You know so much about animals', throughout the session.
- Transitions from one activity to the next are well managed. The practitioner provides the children with a verbal signal in advance of each transition. The practitioner and the children sing a song together before a change in activity. The children also use a timer as a visual and auditory cue. The children are very engaged during tidy-up time. A visual of the daily routine is not currently displayed in the learning room.
- The children are developing an awareness of the local community. A range of outfits, including uniforms of a nurse, a paramedic and a *Garda*, is included in the dress-up area. A *Garda* recently visited the children and plans are in place for other community members to visit in the coming months.
- Snack time is viewed as a relaxed and pleasant experience. The practitioner and the children sit and eat together and they engage in extended conversations about their interests.

#### *Actions advised*

- In order to further enhance the children's sense of identity and belonging, the practitioner is advised to include photographs of the children's families in the learning room.
- The practitioner is advised to display a visual of the daily routine in the learning room. This will support the children's awareness of the transitions during the morning.

## 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.
- Play is the central medium for learning and the children learn in a variety of contexts. A range of play types is facilitated, including construction play, imaginative play and physical play.
- A number of interest areas have been created, such as a home-corner, a construction area and a book area. There are some resources to support the children's early literacy skills in each area and a good variety of puzzles, games and books are provided.
- Planning for learning occurs on medium-term and short-term bases. The medium-term plans identify a range of themes, including road safety, the seasons and festivals. The practitioner observes the children's interests on a regular basis, she documents this information and uses it to inform the weekly curriculum plans. The learning plans are linked to *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- A range of assessment methods is in place. The practitioner has compiled an assessment folder, with a section for each child, containing development checklists, photographs, samples of art work and learning records.
- The practitioner encourages the children to reflect on their previous learning. They have many opportunities to discuss their learning. For example, when the children initiated a discussion about windmills, the practitioner asked them where they had previously seen windmills and an interesting conversation ensued.
- The practitioner is skilled in supporting the children's learning. She effectively extends their language and thinking throughout the morning. During the inspection, the children and the practitioner engaged in an in-depth discussion about farm animals. The practitioner used open-ended questions and prompts to very good effect.
- Songs, rhymes and action games are a key feature of the learning programme. The children also enjoy playing musical instruments during circle time.
- The children have regular access to an outdoor area, which is used to develop their physical fitness and learning. A very good range of materials, including a mud kitchen, tyres, a wall-mounted blackboard and wooden off-cuts in varying shapes and sizes, is available to support their learning. A canopy has been added to this area to allow for outdoor play in all weathers. The practitioner has introduced recycled and open-ended materials in both indoor and outdoor learning environments.

#### *Actions advised*

- The practitioner is advised to compile the children's work, photographs and observations, with more detailed descriptions of their learning dispositions, in individual portfolios. This will help to provide a more in-depth picture of each child's learning and the children can be actively included in this process.
- In order to further support the promotion of the children's early literacy and numeracy skills, the practitioner is advised to provide a broader range of resources in each of the play interest areas.

### **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 present as secure and content; they appear relaxed and negotiate the environment with ease.
- The children's voices are valued and respected in the setting. For example, the practitioner ensures that each child has an opportunity to choose a song to be sung at circle time and she regularly records the children's words and comments on their art work.
- The children demonstrate enjoyment in their learning. They display energy and interest in their chosen activities. This was particularly evident during outdoor play when the children used natural materials to enhance their play ideas. There was great excitement when one child found some ice in the garden and shared the experience with his friends.
- The children communicate their thoughts and ideas with confidence. They clearly articulate their feelings, for example, 'I'm so excited' and 'I think this is a great idea'. One of the children described a recent trip to an aquarium, where he saw a hammer-head shark, in great detail.
- The children are developing many positive dispositions for learning, including imagination and creativity. One child shaped and cut the playdough to make a pizza slice. He added toppings and told his friends that he had made a 'spicy pepperoni pizza'.
- The children are developing positive friendships. They enjoy playing together in small groups and pairs and they enquire with interest about friends that are absent from pre-school.
- The children are aware of the natural environment and its features. They take regular nature walks in the nearby farm and have planted pumpkin seeds and daffodils in the garden. During the inspection, many of the children looked to see if their daffodils had grown.
- The children regularly experience success and mastery in their learning. For example, two children collaborated to build an elaborate house, with windows and a door. They proudly shared their creation with their friends.
- The children are developing their creativity. A good range of resources to support their creativity is stored on an art trolley. On the day of the inspection, the children predominantly engaged in template-art activities.

#### *Action advised*

- The practitioner is advised to develop a designated creative area to support the children's engagement with the available resources and the enhancement of their creativity and imagination.

## AREA 4

### QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The owner/practitioner presents as a professional who is committed to the development of quality early years provision for children. She recognises the value of continuing professional development and has completed a range of mandatory training programmes, and training on *Aistear*. She has also registered to undertake a course on supporting children with additional needs.
- The owner engages in informal self-reflection on a daily basis. She is familiar with the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*.
- The owner avails of advice and support from the local county childcare committee. In addition to this, she regularly engages in professional dialogue with a local practitioner.
- The owner is currently establishing practices to support parental engagement and has developed a plan in this regard. An open-door policy is in place and parents are invited to share their interests and occupations with the children.
- Effective methods of communication with parents are evident. The owner shares photographs of the children engaged in activities with parents through a social media application. The weekly curriculum plans are displayed inside the front door, where parents can view it.
- The children's transition into the setting is well managed. The parents and the children are invited to visit the setting prior to enrolling. This provides an opportunity for the owner to share information about the curriculum and to make parents aware of the setting's policies and procedures. The owner uses a registration form to gather information on the children's likes, dislikes, favourite stories and their interests. She subsequently uses this information to inform the settling-in process.
- The owner is currently in the process of developing practices to support the children's transition from pre-school to primary school. She has established links with the local school and a plan is in place to build on these links. A transitions policy has yet to be developed.

#### *Actions advised*

- In order to establish more formal self-evaluation and reflection practices, the owner is advised to use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* on an ongoing basis.
- The owner is advised to develop a transitions policy, which will outline the practices in relation to the management of transitions between the pre-school and the primary school.

### Summary of Overall Inspection

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

### Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

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

# APPENDIX

## SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

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

Area 1:

- I have printed off the children's family photos and we will be creating a Wall Art for Our Home Area. We are creating a wall hanging using felt and visual photos (laminated) to show our Daily Routine, this will be situated at the entrance.

Area 2:

- Each child has a "Learner Journal" which we now attach their art work, photographs and observations, they are available to view for both parents and children.
- I have introduced writing pads, pencils in the home area, along with a new red desk for the children to create new areas of their choice, already an "office". Magnetic numbers and letters along with a white board and markers has been introduced to our learning room and has turned out a great success.

Area 3:

- We have introduced a Painting Station and made more space for Our Creative Area allowing free access.

Area 4:

- I am now using the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to reflect on my curriculum.
- In the last term of the year we will be introducing visual aids to introduce the transition to primary school. I will be in contact with the primary school teacher about a planned visit with the children and their parents. I will introduce a uniform in the Dress Up Area along with a schoolbag and books. With the children's help, we will create a "My Profile" for the child to bring to the teacher on the School Visit, always keeping the parent involved and included in this transition.