An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills

Follow-through Inspection

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting name</th>
<th>Stepping Stones</th>
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| Setting address | 15 Tredagh Close  
                        Marley’s Lane  
                        Drogheda  
                        County Louth  |
| DCYA number   | 17LH0200/13LH0165 |

Date of Evaluation: 10-12-2018
WHAT IS A FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION?
Follow-through inspections evaluate the progress a service has made on implementing actions advised in an earlier inspection rather than the overall quality of education provision in a setting. Inspectors also advise the setting on strategies and actions to enable them to fully address actions advised in the earlier inspection report.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT
During this inspection, the inspector evaluated the progress the service has made in implementing actions advised in an earlier inspection under the following headings:

1. Progress achieved to date
2. Summary of findings
3. Actions advised

Inspectors describe the quality of the progress made in each of these areas using the Inspectorate’s follow-through quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The follow-through quality continuum explains the terms used by inspectors when evaluating the setting’s progress in implementing actions advised.

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.
### ORIGINAL INSPECTION DETAILS
- **Type:** Early Years Education-focused Inspection
- **Date of Inspection:** 14-10-2016
- **Report Published:** Yes

### FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION DETAILS
- **Date of Inspection:** 10-12-2018

### Follow-through inspection activities

The following activities took place in the course of the follow-through inspection:

- Meeting with the setting deputy manager
- Conversation with early years practitioners
- Review of setting documentation and records of the children’s learning and development
- Review of education resources and facilities
- Observation of a pre-school session
- Interaction with the children

### Action advised in original inspection report vs Progress achieved to date on implementation of action advised

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<th>Action advised in original inspection report</th>
<th>Progress achieved to date on implementation of action advised</th>
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| In order to support the children to understand the daily routine, it is advised that an appropriate visual display be used that is aligned to the actual routine in the playroom. | **Very good progress**  
A visual daily routine is now displayed on a whiteboard in the room at the children’s physical level. On the day of the inspection, at the end of the free play period, a child went to the display unprompted and announced to the group that it was now time to wash hands. Later in the session a practitioner directed two children to the display to check to see what they were going to do next. |
| To further support the children’s developing sense of identity and belonging, it is advised that the cultural and ethnic diversity present in the group and the local community be respectfully and meaningfully celebrated and explored. | **Very good progress**  
Photographs of the children expressing different emotions are displayed around the low level mirror. There is an attractive display of family photographs in the cosy/book area. Many photographic displays of the children engaged in play activities and of people visiting the setting are also displayed. A ‘Step-by-step guide to putting on the hijab’ is displayed in the home area beside the dressing-up resources. |
| In order to support the children’s curiosity and capacities to be creative during adult-initiated learning activities, it is advised that practitioners focus on supporting the children to explore, experiment and be creative rather than on producing a craft product. | **Good progress**  
The children’s creative work is compiled in individualised boxes which are easily accessible to them in the room. Each box contains a mixture of individual creative work and an assortment of template arts and craft work. The children’s art displayed in the room is predominantly of a template nature. On the day of inspection, the children could select between two practitioner-organised activities, one was a craft activity to create a Christmas stocking with pre-cut card and the second was a playdough activity. All children choose to work with the |
playdough and create very individual and unique models with the dough.

| To further develop the range of play opportunities available to children, it is advised that more materials to support sensory play and exploration be provided, such as, water, play dough, gloop, clay, paint, glue and materials from nature. | **Very good progress**

On the day of inspection there was a large plastic sensory box on the floor filled with materials such as tinsel, cotton wool, fabric with differing textures and sensory balls. A wide range of sensory toys, displayed on a low window sill, was easily accessible to the children throughout the session. Water play is provided three times a week in large containers that are freely available to the children. The children used large quantities of home-made playdough of different colours. Some children choose to add cinnamon and glitter to their dough. |

| In order to further promote the children’s language and early literacy development, it is advised that songs, rhymes, chants, and poems be used throughout the session and that practitioners plan for the purposeful use of books with children. | **Very good progress**

The practitioners effectively used songs such as clean-up and hand washing songs to signal transition times. There is a daily story time where practitioners engage the children in discussion and conversation about story books. |

| To further enhance the children’s creative and imaginative expression and development, it is advised that increased opportunities for art, dance, movement to music, story-telling and drama be provided. | **Very good progress**

A box of real musical instruments and laminated song and rhyme cards are easily accessible to the children. At circle time the children were supported to label and discuss how they were feeling, choose a card to represent that feeling and post it beside their photograph. There is a good range of art, collage and mark-making materials easily accessible to the children. The home area is resourced with props and materials to support engagement in socio-dramatic play. |

| In order to extend the sharing of information on the children’s progress in learning and development with parents, it is advised that each child’s key person meets with their parents during the year. | **Very good progress**

The manager and practitioners have planned to begin parent key person meetings early in the new term to share and discuss the children’s progression in learning and development. |

| It is advised that the service incorporates parental views in plans for service and curriculum development. | **Very good progress**

The practitioners display the short-term curriculum plans for parents on the main door to the pre-school room. The children’s individual learner journals are stored in the hallway and are easily accessible to their parents. The manager conducted a survey of all parents at the end of the last pre-school year and received positive feedback and some suggestions from families. Parents were shown a draft from of the new curriculum statement while it was being developed and were asked for their input and to comment on it. |
Summary of findings

- The manager and practitioners are commended on the very good progress made on six of the seven actions advised in the original inspection report and on the good progress made on the remaining action.

Action advised

- It is advised that practitioners reduce the use of template-based art and craft activities and offer the children increased opportunities and support for free, creative explorative art and mark-making.

THE QUALITY CONTINUUM FOR FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very good progress</th>
<th>Indicates that appropriate action has been taken to address the action advised, and that the action has fully achieved or will achieve the required outcome.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good progress</td>
<td>Indicates that appropriate action has been taken to address the action advised, and that substantial improvement has occurred, although further progress is necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial progress</td>
<td>Indicates that some appropriate action has been taken to address the action advised, and some improvement has occurred, but considerable further progress is necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No progress</td>
<td>Indicates that no action has been taken, and that the original action advised remains to be addressed.</td>
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Published May 2019
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report.

The Manager and Practitioners acknowledge that the report accurately describes the interactions, activities, and practices that occur daily in our service. It shows Practitioners are actively involved in all areas of the children’s development and wholeheartedly include parents and families in their child’s Stepping Stones ELC journey, as was evident on the inspection day. The report provides evidence based practice of our genuine belief that a ‘home-from-home’ environment is one of the best early years sources for progressive enhancement of each child’s individualism and lends to our very inclusive and diverse service provision that naturally promotes equality, diversity and respect among all participants.

As observed on the inspection day, we strive to provide the children with as many materials as we can to ignite a passion for creativity in all areas of play, with emphasis on the ‘process’ of interactions rather than the ‘outcomes’ of play as our practice guideline. Overall, we are delighted with the follow-through inspection report, as it clearly acknowledges the dedication and sincere passion our Practitioners have for their roles as Practitioners and as each child’s mentor as they journey through pre-school in our service.

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

Follow-through Inspection Action Advised: “It is advised that Practitioners reduce the use of template-based art and craft activities and offer the children increased opportunities and support for free, creative explorative art and mark-making.”

The Manager and staff acknowledge that this aspect of the report was faithful to the class displays observed by the Inspector on the particular day in question. The next day following the inspection, the staff and Manager met informally to discuss the level of template usage in each of the rooms within the service and concluded that in the best interests of the children and best practices, that templates would not be used anymore. We very much appreciate the Inspector’s constructive feedback and wholeheartedly respect and understand the sentiment behind the action advised.

As such, since the inspection, the children are provided on a daily basis with free access to art materials in many different forms, colours, textures, smells, shapes and uses, that completely cater to their creative needs, with their explorative art solely based on individual pieces constructed by themselves alone. While staff are available at all times and play alongside the children, and aid the children, whenever prompted to do so by them, they acknowledge their role is as a collaborator rather than an instigator. The learning environment, interactions, and materials provision in each room is presently based purely on child led interests, child led creativity and provision of a myriad of materials that are conducive to stimulating and promoting curiosity, exploration, and opportunities for thinking and creativity within each child.
As such, upon reflection, we have very much welcomed and placed a lot of value on the Inspector’s assessment and have since seen a wonderful immersion in the creative arts by the children, an enhanced enthusiasm for creativity and an amazingly imaginative usage of the materials provided. These observations have opened our eyes further to the wonderful potential that lies within each child, and has shown us how we can encourage the unleashing of this endless wealth for exploration and imagination, and how we can truly honour the genuine individualism of each child in our care.