An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI)
Final Report

Setting name	Bluebells Pre-school & Afterschool
Setting address	Scoil Bhríde Loreto Scartlea Muckross Killarney County Kerry V93AY90
TUSLA registration number	TU2021KY001
DCEDIY number	21KY0256
Date of inspection	05-10-2022
Date of issue of report	12-12-2022

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:

- Quality of the context to support children's learning and development
- Quality of processes to support children's learning and development
- Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements
- 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

Dates of inspection	05-10-2022

Inspection activities undertaken

- Pre-inspection meeting with the setting owner/manager
- Meeting with relevant early years educators/other members of staff
- Review of setting documentation and records of children's learning and development
- Review of the education resources and facilities
- Observations of interactions during a number of sessions
- Interaction with the children
- Feedback meeting with the setting manager/owner and early years educators
- Individual feedback to the early years educators

Context of setting

Bluebells Preschool is a privately owned early years setting situated within the Loreto Primary School in Scartlea. Four early years educators provided education and care for sixteen children. One of the educators was employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). 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 was excellent.
- A beautiful, calm and peaceful atmosphere prevailed. The educators showed affection, sensitivity, warmth, respect and a very positive regard for the children and their families.
- It was evident that the educators skilfully planned environments for the children that were calm, relaxed and encouraged curiosity, creativity and playful exploration and learning.
- The daily routine and procedures were carefully crafted and implemented to provide maximum time and space for all children, irrespective of their age or stage of development to freely explore the indoor and outdoor environments, in the company of attentive and aware educators. Times of transitions were kept to a minimum. They were seamless and utilised highly efficiently to promote self-care and autonomy.
- Meal time was a relaxed and calm social occasion and it was utilised very effectively to establish good habits for life. The children were active agents in preparing the meal; they enjoyed the lovely chats and interactions during the meal and tidied up after the meal.
- The educators were role models worthy of imitation. They were self-aware, focussed and authentic in their actions and interactions. They provided very meaningful guidance and highly respectful encouragement towards positive behaviour.
- Practice was completely child-centred and respect and recognition for the uniqueness and individuality of each child were highly evident.
- The children's sense of identity and belonging was nurtured beautifully. The environment depicted the children in self-portraits, in a birthday flower, and on a signing-in board. Their art work was displayed respectfully and in an aesthetically pleasing manner and it captured their voices. A beautiful family tree visually connected the families with the pre-school. A community display board, meaningfully supported the children's sense of being part of the wider local community.

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 was excellent.
- The educators demonstrated skill and knowledge, in their development and implementation of an emergent curriculum, which took account of the children's varying interests, strengths, abilities, learning dispositions and needs.
- The educators documented the children's learning experiences and achievements in a meaningful way, using learning stories and a collection of the children's work. The outcomes of assessment were used to inform curriculum planning and were shared regularly with the children and their families.
- Continuous high-quality interactions between the educators and the children were observed. The children were clearly viewed as competent, confident learners and supported as active agents in their learning. A very effective balance between active listening and speaking was kept. The educators used appropriate interaction strategies very effectively to co-construct knowledge with the children. These included being a play partner, active listening, asking open-ended questions, prompting and scaffolding.
- The indoor environment was beautifully presented, pre-prepared, well-designated, inviting and aesthetically pleasing. It offered an incredibly broad range of play and exploration opportunities. The materials and resources were inspirational, open-ended and developmentally appropriate and provided for rich, multi-sensory learning experiences. Tuff trays were used to incorporate the children's emergent interests, providing painting options and a farm set-up. The beautifully veiled, cosy library area had the potential to become a bear cave, Santa's grotto and much more, depending on the children's interests. The setting was commended for providing a trampoline and a balancing disk, which were used eagerly by the children. These were extremely beneficial for the children's overall physical development, and in particular their sense of balance.
- The children had daily access to several outdoor areas, which offered an amazingly broad range of play and exploration options, physical movement and exertion. In the fairy garden they were inspired to be still, observe and imagine. In a concrete yard they were enabled to use wheely toys, to paint and use chalk, and to play in a sandpit or mud kitchen. They could also experiment with water and construction materials, and balance over different sizes of tree discs.
- Child-initiated/led, active and interactive play was utilised very well throughout the day as the main medium through which the children learned and developed.
- The children's emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills were fostered commendably well and in an age and developmentally appropriate manner. The educators used songs, finger-games and rhymes in English and Irish throughout the day during play situations, for transition times and during activities. A broad variety of mark-making, arts and crafts and messy play opportunities encouraged the children to express their feelings, thoughts and ideas creatively. Hands-on activities were used both indoors and outdoors to build the children's early dispositions towards, science, engineering, the arts and mathematics. These activities included working with sand, earth and water; making and working with play-dough, constructing with a rage of materials and resources.
- Commendably, there were equitable opportunities to engage all children in learning, irrespective of gender, ability, age, ethnicity or background. The use of visual prompts worked very well.

Area 3: Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements was excellent.
- The children arrived happily, and they were at ease and eager to get involved in play. They were settled very well and already showed ownership of the setting. A really tranquil but highly busy, engaged atmosphere was palpable.
- The children were deeply and peacefully engaged in their play explorations and interactions. They showed very positive learning dispositions, such as resilience, resourcefulness, concentration, confidence, creativity and resourcefulness.

- The children's personal and social skills were developing very well. They showed an understanding of and regard for the rights and views of themselves and others and used skills like negotiating, cooperating and self-regulating very well in their interactions.
- The children communicated their ideas, thoughts and feelings with others in a variety of ways, including play, making arts and craft and mark-making, singing, dancing, role-play, and also by communicating verbally and non-verbally.
- Through the rich affordance of play and exploration options both indoors and outside, the children made sense of their world. They were inquisitive and confident in exploring and thinking about their learning experiences and were becoming aware of the natural environment and its features, materials and plants through their daily engagement with them. They used and developed their physical skills by manipulating materials and resources and they broadened their understanding of the world through this regular engagement.

Area 4: Quality of management and leadership for learning

- The quality of management and leadership for learning was excellent.
- Very effective strategies were in place to support and promote reflective practice. Regular formal team meetings, and daily and weekly review meetings were utilised to reflect on and plan practice and procedures. The outcomes of these meetings were documented, so that they can be shared, acted upon and reviewed.
- Management and staff were equally skilled at implementing a systematic process of setting self-evaluation, using the online *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide*.
- An ethos of professionalism, teamwork, collaboration and partnership was very evident.
- The stated, shared philosophy, vision and direction of the work of the setting was evident in the practice of all staff members.
- There was clarity about the roles and responsibilities of staff and everybody demonstrated knowledge, skill, dedication, thoughtfulness, self-awareness and reflection in all aspects of their practice. Their love for their profession and for the children in their care was palpable.
- The educators were highly motivated and they engaged continuously in professional development, in recent times predominately through online courses and webinars.
- The setting had successfully established effective two-way communication with the families. These included daily informal chats, calls, and the use of text-a-parent. Families visited the setting and the setting and the families celebrated festivals together. There were parent-educator meetings and a range of electronic media was used to share information.
- Open-days were offered for the children to familiarise themselves with the setting. The setting was situated within the primary school building and it was very valued as an integral part of the school. Very effective working relationships between the setting and the school are established, to promote continuity of experiences and progression in learning and development at transition times.

Summary of overall inspection

Area	Quality level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	Excellent
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	Excellent
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	Excellent
Quality of management and leadership for learning	Excellent

Language used in Early Years Education Inspection Reports

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the setting using the language which is shown below.

Level	Description
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.*

APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

We in Bluebells preschool strive to create a classroom that is a warm, inviting, environment, which encourages exploration, independence and a love of learning, which is fun and inclusive for all. We love what we do we have fun with it and we are committed to providing a high quality service. We are delighted to see our efforts reflected positively in this 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.**

- We plan to continue upskilling and take part in workshops and training available to us.
- We have committed to use the tools in the Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide more to help us reflect on our practice as Early Years Educators.
- We will continue to reinvest in our preschool to further develop our learning environments.