An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI)
Final Report

Setting name	Clareen Country Crèche
Setting address	Clareen Kilcolman Nenagh Co. Tipperary Tipperary E45YX08
TUSLA registration number	TU2015TY019
DCEDIY number	19TY0096
Date of inspection	23-09-2022
Date of issue of report	30-11-2022

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	23-09-2022
Inspection activities undertaken • Pre-inspection meeting with the setting owner/manager • Introductory meeting with relevant early years educators • 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 assistant manager • Individual feedback to the early years educators	

Context of setting

Clareen Country Crèche is a private full-day, part-time and sessional setting. It is located in Clareen, a rural area on the outskirts of Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. It operates three morning sessions concurrently across three rooms for children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. All three rooms were inspected. In total on the day of the inspection, six educators and thirty-six children were present. 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: Quaity of context to support children's learning and development

- The quality of the context to support the children's learning and development was very good.
- A friendly and welcoming atmosphere was evident in the three early years rooms.
- A key-person approach was in place. This approach supports the development of secure and trusting relationships between the educators, the children and their parents. Each educator was responsible for gathering and sharing information about their dedicated group of children with their parents.
- The educators fostered caring and respectful interactions among the children.
- The educators actively provided for and supported the children's learning through play.
- The daily routine provided for effective periods of child-initiated play in the indoor and outdoor learning environments. During some of these periods, educators introduced adult-initiated activities which interrupted the flow of children's self-selected play.
- A good range of strategies was used at transition times to support children to be involved and move smoothly from one part of the routine to the next. At times, the children did not receive sufficient prompts to prepare them for changes and they experienced short waiting periods before the next activity.
- Through conversations, and engaging with materials and visual displays the children shared their understanding of their community and interests outside the setting. Photographs of the children and their families throughout the environment promoted a sense of belonging.

Actions advised

- The educators are advised to further support child-initiated experiences in the routine by ensuring that the children can enjoy a minimum of one continuous hour of child-led play. Building on the children's interests and areas of enquiry, as observed by the educators, the educators can make available new play props and materials for children to choose from.
- To further promote transition times as active learning experiences for the children, educators are advised to consistently use a range of visual and verbal prompts that enable children to complete their activities at their pace. By involving children more at these times, the waiting times they experience can be minimised.

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 good.
- An effective curriculum was in place that promoted children's learning through play. The themes of *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* broadly informed the provision for the children's learning.
- Emergent and enquiry-based learning as outlined in the setting's curriculum statement was not fully realised within the short-term plans. A different topic or theme selected by the educators was planned out from September to June. At times, these plans reflected the children's interests with some consideration for their own interests and lines of enquiry.
- A variety of suitable assessment strategies was used to gather information about the children's learning.
- The educators respectfully engaged and motivated the children in their learning. They frequently played with the children, demonstrating interest in their actions and extending their learning. They used some open-ended questions to support the children to focus and make meaning of their experiences
- The educators provided children with access to a wide choice of high-quality books. The children's emergent language and literacy skills were fostered through meaningful age-appropriate activities such as child-led mark-making, listening to stories and singing songs.
- The indoor learning environments were organised by the educators into distinct areas that offered a good range of materials and resources to stimulate and support the children's learning. While all materials and resources were easily accessible to the children, there was just a small amount of real and open-ended resources available for them to explore as they played.
- The inviting outdoor learning environment has been divided into distinct areas that offer a suitable range of physical and exploratory play experiences.
- The educators have worked in partnership with parents to promote the children's learning and development. Specific supports for children with additional educational needs have been planned for and incorporated into the daily routine. Educators demonstrated an understanding of an inclusive approach ensuring the engagement of all children within the setting.

Actions advised

- The educators are advised to strengthen their implementation of an emergent and enquiry-based curriculum. When developing short-term plans, educators need to involve the children in planning to a greater extent, and make their individual experiences more meaningful to them.
- The educators are advised to use open-ended questions to a greater extent in their interactions with the children.
- To enhance the children's learning experiences and encourage creative thinking, the educators are advised to provide daily access to ample real, natural, open-ended and sense-rich materials within the environments. By providing materials such as sand, water,

paint and stones, the setting can nurture the children's inclination to become involved in concrete learning which leads to explorations and investigations that occur naturally.

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

- The quality of children's learning experiences and achievements was very good.
- The children appeared happy and overall they were engaged and involved in their learning.
- The children played in different contexts. Outdoor play was facilitated for all children.
- The children made choices and decisions about their play. At times, the educators supported children to think and talk about their choices.
- The children used their developing social skills to play with their peers in pairs and small groups. For example, a group of children cooperated to create 3-D structures with magnets, and while in pairs, the children took turns being the driver and passenger on gladiator bikes outdoors.
- The children had their feelings acknowledged and they frequently heard and used respectful language.
- The children very effectively used their fine motor skills while playing with puzzles, connecting blocks and pegs and small-world toys.
- The children showed great interest in books which they selected and explored during child-led play times. They listened intently and repeated familiar words during story time.
- The children enjoyed doing things for themselves. Specific children were assigned responsibilities such as leader of the line and giving out cups at break time. There were some missed opportunities for children to take responsibility.

Actions advised

- The educators are advised to facilitate children to develop their ideas for play plans to a greater extent. In doing so, each educator could encourage their key group of children to communicate where and how they intend to play, and talk with them about what is available in the environment.
- The educators are advised to further support and enable children to develop their skills to take greater responsibility for managing their own needs. For example, during snack time, children could be supported to butter their own toast and pour their drinks.

Area 4: Quality of management and leadership for learning

- The quality of management and leadership for learning was very good.
- A professional approach was evident in the actions of the educators and management. Clear structures were in place for the roles and responsibilities of staff.
- There have been regular meetings between the room leaders and the manager and assistant manager. These have provided them with the necessary support to be successful in their roles.
- Continuous professional development for the staff has been valued. At the time of the evaluation, the owner and an educator were completing courses in the area of play therapy.
- Review practices have focused mainly on the educators discussing the experiences of the children on a weekly basis. A system for ongoing quality review informed by *Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education* was not yet in place.
- Parents have been provided with opportunities to build positive relationships with their child's key person. They received information about their child's experiences in an informal manner.
- A gentle and gradual approach has been adopted to support the children when they start in the setting. The educators have facilitated one-to-one meetings where they shared key

information about the setting. As children move within the setting, the educators have scheduled visits and shared information with the child's new key person.
- Practical activities have been provided to build children's understanding of primary school. Photographs of the local schools and a sample of school uniforms have been made available. For the majority of children, information about their learning experiences has been shared with the primary schools.

Actions advised

- The educators are advised to avail of the resources and self-evaluation tools in the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* to support them in developing professional reflection and review of their practice. Using regular team meetings, the educators can contribute to and implement quality improvement initiatives.
- It is advised that the educators compile and share strengths-based information with parents for all children moving to primary school. Parents can be encouraged to share this with their child's teacher to support continuity in education. The NCCA's *Mo Scéal* resources are useful in this regard.

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	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

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.*