An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI)

Final Report

Setting name	Danu Community Childcare
Setting address	Presbytery View Rathmore County Kerry P51DX52
TUSLA registration number	TU2015KY038
DCEDIY number	09KY0060
Date of inspection	19-03-2024
Date of issue of report	23-05-2024

What is an Early Years Education Inspection?

The Early Years Education Inspection model is used to provide evaluative information, advice and support in relation to the education of children aged birth to six years in early learning and care settings. The inspections will affirm good practice and provide advice to support internal quality development processes that optimise children's education experiences and outcomes.

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspectors 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	19-03-2024

Activities conducted during the Inspection

- Pre-inspection meeting with the setting manager
- Review of setting documentation and records relating to the children's learning and development
- Review of the education resources and facilities
- Observations of interactions during four Early Childhood Care and Education Programme sessions
- Interaction with children
- Interaction with early years educators
- Feedback meeting with the setting manager, and early years educators

Context of setting

Danu Community Childcare is a community childcare setting operating in Rathmore in County Kerry. It was established in 2008 and provides a full day care service with four morning sessions for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. This inspection took place in four ECCE rooms. On the morning of the inspection, fifty-seven children, and eleven early-years educators were in attendance across all four rooms. 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 was very good.
- The educators were warm, and welcoming to the children and their families. They settled the children as they arrived and had discussions with them. They afforded ample time to these interactions.
- At snack time, the children ate from their lunch boxes or a plastic plate that was offered. The adults supervised and did not sit and eat with the children. This approach merited review.
- Time and space were provided for all the children to explore the indoor and outdoor environments in the company of attentive and aware educators.
- Times of transition within the setting supported positive learning experiences for the children. They were managed effectively and promoted continuity in learning throughout the session.
- The key-person approach supported the development of consistency and security in the children's relationships. The key person acted as an important link between the families and the setting.
- The parents had meaningful and regular opportunities to build strong positive relationships with their child's key person. The use of this approach enabled the educators to have insight into the children's families, cultures and interests.
- The educators modelled and provided guidance and encouragement towards positive behaviour. They skilfully used the conflict resolution steps with the children.
- The children had opportunities to make positive social connections with the other children and the educators throughout the session.

Action advised

- To promote opportunities for further social learning it would be worthwhile to create a more homely, family-type occasion at meal times. The educators are advised to sit, eat and converse with the children.

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 very good.
- The educators developed a broad-based curriculum informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. This was documented and used to support the children's learning and development. Planning for curriculum implementation was organised on long, medium and short-term bases. The emergent interests of the children were not embedded in the planning process.
- The educators used strengths-based assessment approaches to gather information about the children's learning experiences and achievements. This information was used to ensure continuity and progression in their individual learning. The *Aistear Learning Record Template* was used along with a development checklist.
- The children were encouraged and supported to respond creatively as they engaged in learning. They discovered different ways to express their creativity and individuality.
- The educators knew the children well. They were attuned to them and responded to their verbal and non-verbal cues, interests and individual learning needs sensitively and appropriately.
- The indoor and outdoor environments were well maintained, appropriate and inviting. The environments were used to promote movement for the children at all stages of development.
- Play was used as a medium for the children to interact with, explore and make sense of the world. The play opportunities were freely available, accessible, appropriate and well-resourced to sustain purposeful learning and active exploration. The importance of spontaneous play and movement was recognised.
- The educators ensured there was a suitable balance between speaking and listening during interactions. The children were encouraged and supported to express their views, emotions and thinking.
- An inclusive approach was adopted to ensure the engagement of all the children. There were equitable opportunities to engage all the children in learning.

Action advised

- To drive the development of a more emergent, enquiry-based curriculum, planning processes need to take a greater account of the children's interests, and achievements. When planning for future learning and development activities, the educators are advised to incorporate information about the children's interests and their learning to date.

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

- The quality of children's learning experiences and achievements was very good.
- The children were motivated, interested and engaged in their learning experiences. They demonstrated contentment and were secure and at ease within their rooms.
- The information documented about the children's learning reflected their achievements in a range of connected learning experiences appropriate to an early education context.
- The children were able to communicate their interests, opinions, family background and personal experiences. One child spoke of the new baby due to be born in the family. This led to a chat about where the children came in their family, and developed into a lovely wholesome discussion around feelings, love and empathy.
- The children interacted with the other children and adults by listening, discussing, questioning and taking turns in conversations. The *Lámh* method of communication was used with some of the children.
- The children enjoyed relaxed, animated story times in the company of experienced educators. They had time to share their ideas and thoughts and the educators waited for them to come up with answers to thought-provoking questions.
- The children expressed their feelings, thoughts, ideas and creativity through messy play, sensory play, making art, mark making, role playing in the indoor area.
- The children were aware of the natural environment and its features, materials, animals and plants. They were fully engaged with the spring theme, animals and planting tulips.
- The children had opportunities to engage in sensory-rich experiences indoors. This could be extended to the outdoor area.

Action advised

- The educators are advised to review the layout of the outdoor area. Here the children would benefit from a wider range of open-ended materials which support sensory exploration and scientific enquiry. These could include loose parts, recycled materials, tyres, beams and blocks of various sizes.

Area 4: Quality of management and leadership for learning

- The quality of management and leadership for learning was very good.
- The management and the educators provided oversight and had responsibility for the programme of learning and care. An ethos of professionalism, teamwork and partnership was evident. There was scope to promote self-evaluation and reflection through the use of the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide.*
- The views of staff, parents and management were regularly sought through a suggestion box located in the hallway. These suggestions were used to make changes in the setting.
- There was clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the educators with regard to educational activities. The management optimised the effective use of the varied skill sets of the staff.
- Effective strategies were in place to support and promote the continuous development of all the staff in the setting. There was training in additional needs and *Lámh* courses completed.
- The parents and families were made aware of the policies, procedures and curriculum in operation within the setting and were included in a review process through questionnaires. There were three parent representatives on the board of management.
- The management and educators regularly shared verbal and documented information with the parents and families in a spirit of openness, mutual respect and transparency. They hosted a workshop on Play Therapy and a parenting coach was brought in to speak with the parents and families.
- Information was gathered from the parents and families on the children's prior experiences when transitioning into the setting. This was used to ensure continuity of experiences and progression in the children's learning.
- The management had established a professional mutual relationship with the four primary schools which the children will attend. They used a transition flower template to share information that supported the school to recognise the children's experiences, achievements and progression in their learning.

Action advised

- The management are advised to implement a strategic plan to engage the whole setting and individual rooms in self-evaluation and reflection of practice. By delegating responsibilities to educators, the management can aim to review all areas of practices across a two-year cycle.

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

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

Level	Description	Examples of descriptive terms
Excellent	**Provision that is excellent** is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
Very good	**Provision that is very good** is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
Good	**Provision that is good** is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard** is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard** is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective

The following resources can be used by ELC settings in their quality improvement:

Aistear Siolta Practice Guide

Department of Education Insights – Quality in Early Years Education webinars

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