An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI)

Final Report

Setting name	Moyglare Hall Montessori
Setting address	28 The Walk, Moyglare Hall Maynooth County Kildare W23TH5W
TUSLA registration number	TU2023KE008
DCEDIY number	23KE0491
Date of inspection	05-12-2024
Date of issue of report	24-02-2025

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 inspector 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	05-12-2024

Activities conducted during the Inspection

- Pre-inspection meeting with one of the setting's two owner/educators
- 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 a number of Early Childhood Care and Education Programme sessions
- Interaction with children
- Interaction with early years educators
- Feedback meeting with the two setting owners/educators

Context of setting

Moyglare Hall Montessori is located in a housing estate in Maynooth. It has been in operation since 2023. It provides one morning and one afternoon session for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Both sessions were inspected. On the day of the inspection, there were thirty-one children and three educators together with two owner/educators present. 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 very good.
- There was a warm, caring, and welcoming atmosphere at the setting for parents and children. The educators used even tones and respectful interactions when engaging with the children.
- The daily routine followed on the day of the inspection was displayed visually for the children. As part of the daily routine outdoor time was provided at the end of the day. The children self-checked in on arrival using their photograph.
- Transitions were signalled to the children by the educators through verbal reminders, songs, and sand timers.
- A key person approach was evident where key educators were responsible for supporting the completion of children's learning journals, for some small key group work and for engaging with parents. Children were aware of who their key person was. Educators were knowledgeable about children's dispositions, temperaments, strengths, and needs.
- The educators sat with the children at snack time and promoted healthy eating through engaging the children in meaningful conversations. A popular topic was visiting Santa.
- The educators nurtured the children's sense of identity and belonging in varied ways: conversations, birthdays and family displays. The children's photographs were displayed over their coat hooks. Family diversity was celebrated, and resources were evident to affirm diversity at the setting.
- The educators provided opportunities at the setting for families, children, and educators to come together throughout the year; at Christmas and at graduation and through opportunities for parents to share their talents, skills, professions, and cultures. Images of community landmarks were visible for the children and connections had been made with local community representatives. A recent visit had taken place of a local librarian.

Actions advised

- The educators are advised to adapt the order of their daily routine to ensure that outdoor time and physical play opportunities are provided earlier in the routine. It is further advised that opportunities are provided for recap and recall in the routine and a helper system is developed to build on children's independence skills and sense of responsibility.
- It is advised that the children are provided with visual representation of the visits in of parents sharing their skills and talents and of community representatives to the setting.

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 implemented an effective curriculum informed by the Montessori Method and by the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- Planning was organised by the educators on a long, medium, and short-term basis. Planning was informed by themes and seasons and plans were flexible to take account of children's individual emerging interests. The educators used children's observations to inform the short-term planning. The children were grouped into two ECCE groups, in one learning room a younger ECCE group and in the second learning room an older ECCE group.
- The assessment strategies used by educators comprised of Montessori checklists, strengths-based observations and anecdotal notes. The observations recorded ways to inform the next steps in children's individual learning journeys. Each child had an individual learning journal, meaningful to them, which contained artwork, photographs, and their scribed comments of their learning. The learning journals and the observations were shared by educators with parents at the end of the year.
- The educators prepared the indoor environment in advance for the children. There were varied resources with some defined areas of interest; a home corner; dress up, musical instruments and a range of Montessori materials. A tuff tray depicting a winter scene provided a small world sensory play opportunity for the children. There were mark-making materials, connectables, jigsaws, memory games and a very good supply of varied books for the children to engage with. Some labelling was evident, and materials were rotated.
- There was a small outdoor courtyard, which provided opportunities for some play types. It comprised two blackboards, a whiteboard for painting, a sand tray, a fairy tray, a play house, a mud kitchen, opportunities for planting, a basketball net, and a basketball.
- The educators positioned themselves well to be available to the children and there was a good balance between adult-directed and child-directed activities. The educators used open-ended questions to extend children's thinking. Mathematical language and concepts were effectively extended by the educators to support children. The children discussed long and short number rods. Irish was used playfully.
- The setting had made links with external agencies to optimise support for children with additional needs. Specific plans were developed and implemented for individual children in conjunction with their parents.

Actions advised

- The educators are advised to further consider continuity and progression in learning in their planning approach to the provision of learning experiences between year one and year two ECCE.
- The educators are advised to share children's observations and learning documentation with parents regularly to ensure their views inform their child's learning at the setting.

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 observed having lots of fun throughout the day and displayed positive wellbeing. One group discussed the many ways they liked to relax and how important it was to relax. Another group engaged happily with a tuff tray snow scene celebrating winter.

- The children took pride in their learning and their learning environment. They were particularly proud of their singing skills in preparation for an upcoming Christmas concert.
- All children received praise and encouragement from the educators and demonstrated positive self-regulation skills.
- The children interacted very well together, shared, and took turns. Children played independently, in pairs and in small groups. One child explained that the sand timer was used to help you take turns.
- The children were confident, competent communicators, problem solvers and decision makers. One group learned about differentiation through engaging with the colour tablets, through prompts by the educators of which is lighter, which is darker, which is the same.
- The children expressed themselves in varied ways, through singing, poems, story time, deep breathing exercises, engaging with *Lámh*, and engaging in process art activities. They engaged with considerable enthusiasm in a number of action songs, including Jingle Bells, When Santa Got Stuck Up The Chimney and Santa Claus Is Coming To Town.
- The children's fine motor skills were developing through cutting, gluing, and engaging with their Montessori materials.
- The children were developing their independence skills through hanging up their coats and tidying up.
- The children had vision of their own learning through their mark-making, template art activities, their meaningful learning journals, and some wall displays. They were provided with choice about which creations to bring home each week and which to put into their learning journals.

Action advised

- The provision for play can be enhanced by the educators in the indoor and outdoor learning environments by re-arranging the learning environment, providing more real materials and the provision of purposeful opportunities and resources that support gross physical movement.

Area 4: Quality of management and leadership for learning

- The quality of management and leadership for learning was very good.
- The educator team were very dedicated to quality practice and an ethos of professionalism and teamwork was very evident. A mission statement and a curriculum statement were in place.
- There were documented induction procedures in place for new staff and informal individual support and supervision processes for educators were provided. One owner/educator acted as a mentor for the staff team.
- All educators were as reflective and informally met each day to discuss practice. Informal planning meetings were held weekly with more formal staff meetings held monthly, which were recorded.
- The educator team regularly reviewed and reflected on the curriculum and the periodic evaluations of practice carried out were informed by the principles of *Aistear* and *Síolta*. The *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* had been beneficial in this regard.
- The educators engaged in regular continuing professional development. Recent training that had been carried out included training on selective mutism and *Lámh* training. Records of training conducted were kept in educators' personnel files.
- The setting had established very positive links with parents; there were informal opportunities for parents to discuss their child's learning and progress at arrival and collection times and a social messaging application was used for individual communication with parents. Group learning was shared through a weekly theme display, monthly newsletters, and photographs. A parent handbook was in place. Meetings were held with parents if a need arose, or a parent requested it.
- Transitions into and out of the setting were well managed by the educators. An open-day event was provided for families in advance of their child starting at the setting. The educators used the *'Mo Scéal'* transitions resources made available by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment to support children in transitioning to primary school.

Resources to support children transitioning to school included photographs of the local schools, uniforms, and books about starting school.

Action advised

- The management team are advised to formalise their organisational structures to continuously build on quality practice. This can include conducting annual appraisals, annual training needs analysis, and developing additional mechanisms for parents to review practice at the setting. It is further advised that meetings with parents to discuss their child's learning follow a strengths-based approach.

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

APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

We accept the report as the final inspection report. We dedicated and committed to ensuring a high standard of care and education in our preschool. We were grateful for any advice we were given by the inspector to improve on our service and immediately took acted upon the advice the inspector had given us. We have indicated these actions in Part B.

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

- At the beginning of each year we will ask the parents what they would like their child to work on in regards to their learning to distinguish between year 1 + year 2 learning. Year 2 children will be able to move on to the other areas of Montessori in order to challenge them.
- We have started to share observations with parents through WhatsApp as well as in their journals.
- We have provided more space in the classroom by removing an extra kitchen and table and storage unit with extra jigsaws out to the kitchenette. We added a football net to the garden, and we are buying a climbing frame to replace the playhouse. We are buying balance beams for the garden also. We have added more real materials to the kitchen and dressing table we will conduct annual appraisals. We have provided more opportunities for recap and recall, and we have developed a daily helper system. In the next newsletter we will ask parents to come in to share their talents or speak about the country they are from. We bought a floor book for visits etc.