An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

Follow-Through Inspection
Final Report

Setting name	Stepping Stones Play-School
Setting address	Bruree County Limerick V35E928
TUSLA registration number	TU2015LK165
DCEDIY number	10LK0144
Date of inspection	04-12-2025
Date of issue of report	25-02-2026

What is a Follow-Through Inspection?

Follow-through inspections evaluate the progress a setting 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 setting 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.

ORIGINAL INSPECTION DETAILS	FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION DETAILS
Type: EYEI - Pre-school	**Date of Inspection: 04-12-2025**
Date of inspection: 02-03-2023	
Report published: Yes	

Follow-through inspection activities

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 an Early Childhood Care and Education Programme session
- Interaction with children
- Interaction with early years educators
- Feedback meeting with the setting manager

Context of Setting

Stepping Stones Play-school is a community early learning and care setting which provides a sessional service for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, the manager, three early years educators, and sixteen 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.

Action/s advised in Area 1 in the original inspection report	Progress achieved to date on implementation of actions advised
The educators are advised to ensure that all of them sit, eat and converse with the children at snack time. In place of the current practice, the children could independently choose what they want to eat for snack and what to keep for the later lunch.	**Very good progress** It was evident that the educators had made very good progress in this area. Snack time was a very relaxed shared, social occasion with time provided for lots of conversations. A child helper gave out the lunch bags and the children were independent in preparing their lunch items; the educators sat and ate with the children.
The educators are advised to display more images of the children, their families and the community. This will support the children to make concrete connections and help embed their sense of self and their sense of belonging to a wider group. These displays need to be accessible to the children so that they can view and discuss them.	**Good progress** Previously, the educators had arranged visits from community helpers, such as the Fire Brigade. There were plans being developed to visit the local residential care home to do carol singing and to attend a Christmas concert in the primary school. On review of the curriculum plans, there was evidence of the incorporation of the topic of community helper through activities for the children to explore. There was some imagery within the learning environment which depicted the children and their families.
Action/s advised in Area 2 in the original inspection report	**Progress achieved to date on implementation of actions advised:**
The educators are advised to incorporate their observations of the children's current and emerging interests more fully into the	**Partial progress** The planning completed by the educators was thematic and not documented consistently. There was some evidence of the children's emergent interests noted on the planning documents;

short-term planning. This will support and enhance their enquiry-based learning.	there were limited details included. The individual learning journals contained template art, some free mark making and commentary. The journals did not reflect the individual learning journey or progression of each child.
The educators are advised to reduce the emphasis which is currently placed on template based and dot-to-dot activities, pre-writing skills and adult-directed art. Instead, the children need more opportunities to engage in process-oriented, open ended art and creative tasks; and informal tasks which support early exploration of print.	**Partial progress** There was limited provision for open-ended creative art experiences in the learning rooms. On the day of the inspection, the children explored free painting on cling film in the outside play area. There was still much evidence of a focus on template, outcome-orientated art and craft work. This was apparent from the individual learning journals, the group learning journal and the artwork on display.
Action/s advised in Area 3 in the original inspection report	**Progress achieved to date on implementation of actions advised:**
The educators are advised to develop the current folders into individual learning journals which can be created by the children and shared with their families regularly. 'Documenting children's learning and development' in the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide provides ideas and suggestions.	**Very good progress** The educators made very good progress in this area. Each child had access to their individual learning journal. The journals were available for the parents to review and were sent home at the end of the year.
The educators are advised to support the children to discuss their creative mark-making. They are also advised to record more extensively, the children's interpretations of their mark-making and other creative work.	**Good progress** There was some evidence of commentary in the learning journals and annotations of the children's interpretations of their mark-making. This was not consistent practice.
Action/s advised in Area 4 in the original inspection report	**Progress achieved to date on implementation of actions advised:**
The educators are advised to further develop their reviews of practice by using the self-evaluation tools in the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide. This will assist in affirming quality practice and support the setting to record and monitor its self-review processes.	**Very good progress** The educators were actively engaged in reflective practices. They used the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* to reflect and evaluate practice. Team meetings were used to discuss the self-evaluations and to develop a plan of action. The manager advised they have recently engaged *Better Start, the Quality Development Support* agency to further support their quality development journey.
The educators are advised to build on the existing links with the primary school by inviting the principal and junior infant teachers to visit the children in the pre-school. In collaboration with parents, the Mo Scéal templates could be completed and shared with the primary school. This approach will promote recognition of the children's experiences and achievements and progression in their learning.	**Very good progress** The educators had made very good progress in relation to developing their links with the primary school. They have strengthened their relationship with the school; they attend school events throughout the year, the principal visits the playschool and the educators complete the *Mo Scéal* transition template.

Summary of findings
The changes implemented to practice and provision by the manager and educators to address the actions advised that were outlined in the original EYEI report were recognised and affirmed. Of the eight actions advised, very good progress was made in four, good progress was made in two, and partial progress was made in two.
Actions advised
• To further develop the children's sense of identity and belonging, the educators are advised to provide additional resources and relevant activities which represent the children's individual identities. The addition of displays that represent their engagement with the local community would also be of benefit. • The educators are advised to continue to develop their planning and assessment practices; to ensure the next steps are used consistently to inform the short-term curriculum plans. The key person approach will assist in this action as the educators use their knowledge of their key children's interests, individual needs and dispositions to inform the curriculum planning process. • The educators are advised to further extend the opportunities for the children to express themselves creatively through enhanced opportunity for engagement with process art, rather than template or product art. • The educators are advised to enhance the current learning journals through the consistent incorporation of the child's reflections and ideas and through documenting the responses to the children's individual emergent interests, needs and dispositions. This will then reflect a rich, individualised, holistic learning journey for each child.

Language used in Early Years Education Follow-through inspection reports

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

Level	Description
Very good progress	Very good progress 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.
Good progress	Good progress indicates that appropriate action has been taken to address the action advised, and that substantial improvement has occurred, although further progress is necessary.
Partial progress	Partial progress indicates that some appropriate action has been taken to address the action advised, and some improvement has occurred, but considerable further progress is necessary.
No progress	No progress indicates that no action has been taken, and that the original action advised remains to be addressed.

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

Aistear Síolta Practice Guide

Aistear - Nurturing Skills website

Department of Education Insights – Quality in Early Years Education webinars