An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Follow-Through Inspection
Final Report

Setting name	The Cave
Setting address	The Cave High Street Wicklow Town County Wicklow A67AE95
TUSLA registration number	TU2015WW100
DCEDIY number	15WW0266
Date of inspection	10-03-2025
Date of issue of report	22-05-2025

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.

The change in the title used to refer to staff in ELC settings, from 'practitioner' to 'educator', reflects the change in title outlined in 'Nurturing Skills: The Workforce Plan for Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare, 2022-2028'.

ORIGINAL INSPECTION DETAILS	FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION DETAILS
Type: EYEI - Pre-school **Date of inspection: 24-05-2023** **Report published: 11-09-2023**	**Date of Inspection: 10-03-2025**

Follow-through inspection activities

Activities conducted during the Inspection

- Pre-inspection meeting with the setting owner/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 two Early Childhood Care and Education Programme sessions
- Interaction with young children
- Interaction with early years educators
- Feedback meeting with the setting owner/manager

Context of Setting

The Cave is a privately-owned Early Learning and Care (ELC) setting located in Wicklow town, County Wicklow. The setting operates a morning pre-school session for children who are participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the morning of the inspection, twenty-one children were in attendance along with three early years' educators. Since the original inspection the setting had extended its registered hours from sessional care to part-time care. 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.

Action advised in Area 1 in the original inspection report	Progress achieved to date on implementation of actions advised
The educators are advised to further extend the key person approach to include planned small group activities and for the sharing of observations with parents.	**Very good progress** The educators had made significant progress in regards to extending the children's learning and development through planned small group activities. They recorded weekly observations of the children's learning and development as they participated in activities, and used these observations to further plan for and extend the children's learning. The key educators shared the children's learning and development progress with parents on a daily basis through informal chats during drop off and collection times, and shared written observations with parents on a termly basis.
Actions advised in Area 2 in the original inspection report	**Progress achieved to date on implementation of actions advised:**
To further assist in planning for children's learning the educators are advised to incorporate children's emerging interests, strengths and dispositions into the planning process. The resources and planning templates available in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will support them in this approach.	**Very good progress** The educators captured and extended the children's emergent interests in the moment. They supported the children's ideas and thinking and reasoning language, by encouraging them to source relevant resources around the learning room, to extend their learning. They used templates to record the children's emerging interests daily and weekly onto templates, and incorporated these into planned activities, which all children could participate. The educators had extended a child's interest in rockets and space by

	including resources including astronaut figurines and sensory materials in a tuff tray and books about rockets and space in the room.
The educators are advised to develop their current approaches to recording children's learning and to include clear steps for progression. In so doing, the current snapshots may be used as a base to regularly record information on the children's learning. The role of the key person will be beneficial in identifying the children's strengths and dispositions and in the sharing of the information with parents.	**Very good progress** The educators completed regular learning and development observations using *Aistear* learning records. These included photographs, descriptions of learning and next steps in learning progression. Weekly learning observations were recorded by the key educators for each child and these identified the children's strengths and learning dispositions and informed planning for small group activities. Observations were shared with parents on completion and were sent home in children's learning journals each term.
Action advised in Area 3 in the original inspection report	**Progress achieved to date on implementation of actions advised:**
The educators are advised to further develop their practices in relation to the development of the child-helper routine and displaying it a child height. This could be planned in advance with the children and could include additional jobs throughout the session, such as a line leader, weather helper.	**Very good progress** The educators had created a 'jobs board' display which was prominently displayed on the entrance door in the learning room. This 'jobs board' included four key 'helper' roles which were depicted through child-friendly images. The educators had displayed photographs of each child beside a 'job' for each pre-school day. This ensured that all children had a 'job' over the duration of the week. In addition, the children took turns to be the daily line leader. During the inspection, the children were observed having great autonomy in engaging in their 'helper' roles, to prepare and give out snack.
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 avail of the professional self-evaluation tools in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to support them in their professional reflection and review of their practice.	**Very good progress** The educators had completed two *'Creating and Using the Learning Environment*' self-evaluation tools from the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* (ASPG) and recorded detailed reflections and notes for quality improvement progression. In addition, they completed reflections on their medium-term plans and activities. The owner and educators reported their professional commitment to ongoing engagement with the self-evaluation tools in the ASPG, towards progressing quality development improvements.
The educators are advised to develop a transition policy that outlines the procedures to support the children's transition to primary school. In addition, the owner is advised to begin to build formal links with the local primary schools.	**Very good progress** The educators had developed a commendable transition policy which outlined clear procedures of the practices they had implemented in supporting the children's smooth transitions from pre-school to primary school. Sample procedures included; collaborative communications with schools and parents; supporting children's skills and individual learning needs; outlined clear roles and responsibilities of the educators and parents; and playful activities to aid transitions. The educators had established relationships with the local feeder schools. With the parents' consent, the educators had created a display noting which children were attending the same schools, this supported further development of relationships amongst children and families.

Summary of findings
Very good progress had been made in relation to all six actions advised under relevant areas in the original inspection. The owner and educators demonstrated significant commitment to progressing the original actions advised and to enhancing and improving the children's learning and development experiences and outcomes.
Action advised
• Building on the very good progress made in regard to planning small group activities, the educators are advised to include planning for children's inquiry based and emergent interests into these activities.

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 Siolta Practice Guide

Department of Education Insights – Quality in Early Years Education webinars