An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth

# Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI)

## Final Report

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| Setting name | Tintern Childcare Centre |
| Setting address | Ballycullane<br>New Ross<br>Wexford<br>Y34X767 |
| TUSLA registration number | TU2015WX127 |
| DCEDIY number | 09WX0130 |
| Date of inspection | 30-04-2026 |
| Date of issue of report | 16-06-2026 |

# 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(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.

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.

## Early Years Education Inspection

| Date of inspection | 30-04-2026 |
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**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 two Early Childhood Care and Education Programme sessions
- Interaction with children
- Interaction with early years educators
- Feedback meeting with the setting manager and early years educator

## Context of setting

Tintern Childcare Centre is a community Early Learning and Care (ELC) setting, which is located in a community sports complex in a rural area in County Wexford. The setting, which was established in 2010 provides part-time ELC, including the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme for the children attending. On the day of the inspection, five educators were present, along with thirty-one children, across two learning rooms.

## 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 atmosphere in the setting was extremely pleasant and relaxed. The educators welcomed the children and their families warmly on arrival and the children were excited to join their friends. During this time the educators engaged in relaxed chats with parents.
- The interactions between the educators and the children were kind, positive and respectful. The educators displayed affection and positive regard towards the children and affirmed them throughout the morning.
- The key person approach which was in place in the setting supported the development of strong bonds and relationships with children and their families. This role also included planning for learning and completing learning records for a key group of children, along with supporting small group play experiences.
- The educators planned a daily routine which included time for free play, small and large group learning experiences, snack time and outdoor play.
- The children's identity and belonging was very effectively supported through photographic displays which reflected the children, their families and the local community. Some of the children were interested in viewing their image in the full length mirrors that were positioned at child level in the learning rooms.
- Parents were welcomed into the setting. Photographs depicting parents spending time with the children in the setting were displayed in the learning environment and parents and children's extended families were invited to a Christmas concert and a Graduation event.
- Snack time was a relaxed and pleasant social occasion. The educators sat and ate with the children. The children had the opportunity to listen to a story during this time, if they wished to do so.
- Transitions during the morning were verbally signalled by the educators. Whilst a visual daily routine was included in each learning room, they were not used by the educators to guide the children though the morning routine.
- The children had developed a very strong awareness of the local community and they were visible within it. They went on nature walks and curiosity walks in the locality and visited the local *Garda* station and community garden. The children were also visited by the local rescue helicopter service. Their recent experiences in the community were documented,

through photographs and an article in a local newspaper which featured the rescue helicopter visit was displayed in the learning room.

### Action advised

- In order to support the children's sense of predictability and their engagement in the daily routine, the educators are advised to consistently refer to the daily visual schedules.

## 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 curriculum approach in the setting was play based and was linked to *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.*
- The educators recognised the value of play. The children had ample time to engage in high quality play experiences, which included sensory play, socio-dramatic play and physical play.
- Curriculum planning occurred on a long-term and short-term basis. The long-term plan outlined goals for the children's learning, whilst the short-term plans documented the learning experiences which were planned for the children on a weekly basis. Whilst there was evidence that the educators planned learning experiences based on children's interests, this information was not included in the short-term plans.
- The educators assessed the children's learning through the completion of learning records and they compiled samples of the children's themed and seasonal artwork. These were included in a folder for each child. An observation checklist, which focused on developmental domains and the attainment of skills was completed for each child and shared with parents at two points during the year.
- The indoor learning environment supported the children's learning and exploration. A number of clearly defined interest areas had been developed, including a home area, a construction area and a book area. A good variety of resources were available to the children and storage boxes were clearly labelled with photographs of items to assist the children in selecting and replacing play items.
- The children had access to an outdoor play space. On the day of the inspection, the children had the choice to play outdoors or in the large sports hall. They expressed a preference for setting up an obstacle course in the hall.
- The children's early literacy and numeracy was effectively fostered through puzzles and books.
- The educators thoughtfully supported the children's learning and their language development. They engaged them in authentic and rich conversations and encouraged children to think critically and to make decisions during their play. This was evident when an educator sat alongside a group of children that were building a tall tower with blocks. She used various words associated with building and prompted them to predict what might happen as the tower became taller and taller.
- The children learned in an inclusive environment. The educators recognised the strengths and interests of each child and availed of support through the Access and Inclusion (AIM) Model.

### Action advised

- The educators are advised to create a richer and unique picture of the children's learning, to highlight their learning dispositions, strengths, interests and culture. This action can be achieved through the introduction of individual learning journals.

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

- The quality of children's learning experiences and achievements was very good.
- It was evident that they were enjoying their learning experiences. They engaged in sustained play in their chosen areas of interest.

- The children were developing many positive dispositions for learning including curiosity, perseverance and problem-solving. They made decisions in relation to their play experiences.
- The children had many opportunities to experience success and mastery. They built tall towers, completed complex puzzles and planted seeds. The educators had yet to develop the practice of making the children's learning visible to them.
- It was evident that the children were making sense of the world through their play. A small group of children were observed washing babies in a bath. They washed them carefully, dried them and cared for them.
- The children had many opportunities to develop their independent skills. They managed their self-care needs with confidence and completed a variety of tasks, during the morning.
- Many friendships had been developed amongst the children. This was evident as they played together and enjoyed each other's company.
- The children communicated their thoughts and ideas with great enthusiasm.
- The children displayed a positive interest in books and stories and enjoyed listening to them in the company of an educator.
- The children were developing an awareness of the features of planet earth and engaged in conversations about recycling materials. They had also planted a variety of seeds, which some of the children checked on during the morning. The children also had opportunities to play with water, straw, moss peat and sand.
- The children were developing the physical skills. They completed an obstacle course in the hall. Activities such as pegging clothes on a small clothesline and putting clothes on hangers were included in the home area in one of the learning rooms.

### Action advised

- The educators are advised to make the children's learning, achievements and progress visible to them on an ongoing basis, in collaboration with the children. Including the children in the development of their individual learning journals will support this.

### Area 4: Quality of management and leadership for learning

- The quality of management and leadership for learning was very good.
- The team presented as committed and professional and were knowledgeable in the area of early childhood education and care. Clear roles and responsibilities were identified and the morning session was well organised and ran smoothly.
- The manager provided hands-on support, leadership and guidance for the educators in the learning rooms.
- Team meetings, which typically focused on operational matters were scheduled as required during the term.
- The educators had engaged with the *Better Start Quality Development Service* to support quality development and had used the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide (ASPG)* to focus on aspects of quality.
- The educators engaged in continuing professional development (CPD). Two of the educators had undertaken a programme of study in Early Childhood Education and Care at undergraduate level and a number of educators had recently completed the Hanen Language and Early Literacy Programme. Other professional learning programmes completed included those on sensory processing and *Lámh*, along with training on the *Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Guidelines*.
- The educators had developed strategies to share information with parents. There were opportunities for daily informal chats and information sharing during arrival and collection times. General information on the setting was shared through a computer application and a developmental checklist observation was shared with parents during the year.
- The educators supported the children to experience a positive transition from pre-school to primary school. The principal of the local school visited the children and the junior infant teacher and the Special Needs Assistant were invited to visit the setting. The educators also accompanied the children on a visit to the school and planned shared events, such as a visit from the local rescue helicopter and the fire engine. Photographs of the school were included in the learning environment. In addition to this, the educators completed the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) *Mo Scéal* transition documents for each child.

### Actions advised

- In order to enhance the quality development processes currently in place, the manager is advised to provide opportunities for the educators to reflect on the curriculum and engage in regular self-evaluation.
- The educators are advised to share the children's learning and progress with parents on an ongoing basis throughout the year. The learning journals, once developed, will support this.

## 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

Aistear - Nurturing Skills website

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 received very valuable feedback and ideas on ways to help us going forward on documenting the children's learning, it was very much explained to us in simple terms and how to document and capture the child's learning. We were delighted to hear the positive feedback from the inspector and receive recognition for the service we provide in Tintern.

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

Following on from receiving our inspection report, we held a staff meeting on the advice received in our report. From September we are going to change how we capture the child's learning and planning, and create a richer and unique picture of the child's learning through our learning journals – the key worker will document with postits in the child's learning journal, what the child was doing in the photo and ways to extend the learning for the child based on interests . We plan to create a space for children's learning journals that they are visible to children daily and share them more regularly with parents.

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