



A Guide to Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI)

Inspectorate

Department of Education and Skills





**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

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1. Introduction

1.1 Inspections and this guide

The Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) works to improve the quality of learning for children and young people in Irish schools, centres for education, early years settings providing State funded early childhood care and education for children from 2 years 8 months until they enrol in primary school and other learning settings. Our inspections are designed to evaluate key aspects of education provision in the educational setting inspected and to promote improvement in that setting. The Inspectorate is also responsible for the provision of advice to the education system, the Minister and policy makers. Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI) is carried out in accordance with section 13(3)(b) of the Education Act 1998 and in line with a Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, the Minister for Education and Skills and the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills. Early Years settings, funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to deliver the universal free early childhood care and education (ECCE) Programme, are also obliged, under the terms of their grant agreement, to facilitate inspection by the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate (DCYA 2018 section 8.1).¹

This guide outlines how we conduct inspections in early years settings and is effective from 1 September 2018. It replaces the previous *Guide to Early Years Education Focused Inspection (EYEI) in Early years Settings Participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme* (2016). It was developed in light of our experience inspecting early years settings since April 2016 and following consultation with stakeholders and partners involved in the development and delivery of high quality early childhood education and care in Ireland. The EYEI model of inspection operates in line with the *Code of Practice for the Inspectorate*, Department of Education and Skills (2015)², available at www.education.ie.

¹ Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)(2018) Early Childhood Care and Education Programme General Conditions and Grant Funding Agreement 2018/2019

² Inspectorate, Department of Education and Skills (2015) *Code of Practice for the Inspectorate*. Dublin: DES

2. What are EYEIs designed to do?

Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI) evaluates the nature, range and appropriateness of the early educational experiences of children in state-funded early years settings. The EYEI model of inspection is based on a quality framework informed by the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*³, and *Síolta: the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*⁴ as well as national and international research related to early childhood education and inspection.

Among the principles underpinning the quality framework are the following:

- Early childhood is a significant and distinct time which must be nurtured, respected, valued and supported in its own right
- High quality educational experiences in early childhood contribute significantly to life-long learning success
- Children’s well-being and holistic educational development should be supported in early childhood in accordance with their needs
- The role of the practitioner in early years settings is central⁵
- Children should be active agents in their learning and development and enabled to achieve their potential as competent, confident learners, through high-quality interactions with their environment and with early-years practitioners
- Children’s strengths, needs, opinions, interests and well-being are integral to the early education provided for them
- Play is central to the learning and development of young children
- Each child has his/her own set of experiences and a unique life story. The child’s identity as an individual and as a member of a family and wider community is recognised
- The role of parents as children’s primary educators is recognised and supported

Early-years education inspection takes cognisance of context factors related to the early years setting, including socio-economic circumstances.

The EYEI model is designed to:

- Highlight the importance of high-quality early education and care in nurturing the foundations for lifelong learning and in helping children develop to their full potential now and into the future
- Identify and affirm good educational provision in early years settings
- Support the ongoing development of quality in early years settings through the provision of support and advice to practitioners about how children’s learning experiences and achievements can be developed or improved

³ National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2009) *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. NCCA, Dublin

⁴ Department of Education and Skills (2010) *Síolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*. Department of Education and Skills. Dublin.

⁵ In Ireland, a range of role titles is used to refer to the adult working directly with children in early education settings to support and promote their learning, well-being and development. These include pre-school leader, pre-school teacher, teacher, early years educator, early years professional and early years practitioner. For the purposes of this document the term early years practitioner is used.

- Complement other national measures to support continuing improvement in early education provision, for example, mentoring and training to support settings provided by *Better Start* and the *Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide*
- Support self-evaluation and review processes in early years settings
- Provide an assurance of the quality of the early education experienced by children participating in the ECCE Programme
- Provide information to the public, including parents of pre-school children, on the quality of education in early years settings through the publication of written inspection reports.

2.1 External inspection of early years settings

External inspections facilitate improvement and change in education provision. They provide an external perspective on the work of the early years setting. Inspection reports provide evidence-based judgements about the quality of education provision and affirm the aspects of practice that are working well. The outcomes of inspection also inform the judgements of staff about the strengths and priorities for improvement in the early years setting. In this way, they help to complement internal self-evaluation and review processes. The *actions advised* in inspection reports provide important direction for the early years setting as the setting seeks to bring about ongoing improvement in the quality of provision and practice.

All of our inspection models focus on the quality of pedagogy, the opportunities for learning and the educational experiences and achievements of children. EYElS may also focus on the quality of support for learners, the quality of action planning for improvement and the quality of pedagogical leadership and management, including how the setting interacts with parents and families.

The EYEl model is used to provide evaluative information, advice and support regarding the quality of education provision in early years settings with reference to the content of the following four areas of practice:

- The quality of the context to support children's learning and development
- The quality of the processes to support children's learning and development
- The quality of children's learning experiences and achievements, and
- The quality of management and leadership for learning.

These four areas of practice are further elaborated in the *Quality Framework for Early Years Education* as detailed on page 15 of this Guide.

Early-years education inspection is a collaborative process involving the inspection team and staff in the early years setting, including the early-years practitioner(s) and management (e.g. owner/manager and/or members of the board of management). The EYEl model also complements the monitoring and regulatory processes of other agencies in respect of early years provision. The evidence base of an EYEl in a particular setting may include, where available, relevant evaluative information on education provision in the setting gathered through other inspection activity. The EYEl model takes account of the progress a setting has made in respect of the *actions advised* in previous inspections. Where information is shared, the parameters governing such sharing are clearly outlined in MOUs with the agencies concerned.

Inspections support co-professional engagement between early years practitioners and the inspector. Most of the inspector's time during inspection is given to direct observation of pedagogy and learning in the various learning contexts/learning environments provided by the setting. The purpose is to assess the quality of provision, affirm the work of practitioners and children and support quality improvement. The inspector's feedback, informed by evaluation activities during inspection, should enhance professional reflection and self-evaluation and ultimately improve experiences and outcomes for children.

Inspections aim to support the educational leadership role of leaders and managers of the early years setting by providing the opportunity for professional dialogue with inspectors on matters of particular interest to the continuing improvement of the setting.

Typically, EYEIs result in the publication of an inspection report. This report and the oral feedback provided at the conclusion of the inspection, can support early years settings to identify strengths in educational provision and facilitate professional reflection on aspects requiring further development.

The Inspectorate acknowledges that young children and their parents are key stakeholders in the early years setting's community. Our framework for inspection makes strong provision for representation of the voice and experience of children in our evaluation activities and we are committed to exploring mechanisms to engage with parents on their perspectives on quality in early years settings as part of our inspection programme.

2.2 Our inspection models

We currently have two distinct inspection models to evaluate early years settings. These are Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI) and Follow-Through Inspection (FT). The Follow-Through Inspection model enables us to evaluate how settings have implemented the *actions advised* in previous inspection reports.

Each of our inspection models takes into account the particular context of the early years setting. Factors such as size, location, socio-economic factors affecting the population of learners and their community, children's special educational needs and the support they require, may impact on the provision and practice of the setting. We recognise that early years settings work within a very specific context and we take these factors into consideration when we evaluate.

2.3 Key principles that inform our inspections

As an Inspectorate, we are focused on ensuring that the learners in a wide range of education settings receive the best possible education in the light of their potential and their learning needs. We promote high standards in pedagogy and in the learning outcomes and experiences of learners and strive to enable those learning organisations to improve the quality of the education and care they provide.

Our work is underpinned by four key principles:

- A focus on learners
- Development and improvement
- Respectful engagement, and
- Responsibility and accountability.

The four key principles, described in detail in our *Code of Practice for the Inspectorate* (available on the website of the Department of Education and Skills, www.education.ie), provide the standards that inform and guide our work. These principles govern the full range of inspectors' evaluation and advisory work in all settings, including early years settings, schools, centres for education and a range of other settings. We also take due account of data protection legislation in conducting our early years inspection work.

We are committed to carrying out our inspections in ways that provide real opportunities to affirm good practice and to provide practical advice to individual practitioners, managers and to boards of management with the ultimate aim of improving learning experiences and outcomes for all children.

This means that:

1. We are open and transparent about the way we collect and collate the evidence on which our evaluative judgements are based:
 - We adhere to our published guides as they relate to inspection activity

- We apply evaluation criteria consistently, drawing on the *Quality Framework for Early Years Settings* (2016) (See page 15 and Appendix 1 for more detail)
2. Our evaluative judgements are based on the collection of objective, dependable, high quality data having taken the context of the early years setting into consideration:
- As part of our evidence-gathering, we engage in dialogue with children, practitioners, managers and leaders; and we meet with other relevant staff and boards of management where possible and appropriate.
 - We use the evidence we gather to support our findings and our *actions advised* in a manner which is fair to all concerned
 - We rely on a range of evidence from a number of different sources
 - We conduct post-evaluation meetings to clarify, inform and confirm our findings
 - We provide opportunities for the staff in an early years setting to engage in professional dialogue with us during our inspection activity
 - We provide an opportunity for the early years setting to respond to the relevant main findings of the inspection through publication of a setting response where provided.
3. We respect the right of individuals to privacy, as far as possible, and consistent with our duty to report on quality and standards
- We are sensitive towards the individual persons with whom we engage and we are committed to courtesy, respect and fairness in all interactions with individuals and groups
 - Every effort is made to preserve the positive relationships which exist between those involved in managing and leading the early years setting, staff, parents and learners
 - In certain circumstances, we may receive other information in a manner in which the person providing that information has a reasonable expectation that the information is given in confidence. While we will respect confidences, we cannot guarantee the absolute confidentiality of the information provided or the anonymity of the individual person or persons providing the information. However, having due regard to statutory provisions, we will seek to protect the anonymity of the person, if we believe that he or she had the understanding that it was being given in a confidential manner and that to release the information to others would prejudice the receipt of such information in the future.
4. We report objectively and fairly on the quality of education provision:
- We set out clearly and unambiguously the main findings and *actions advised* arising from the inspection so as to enhance the motivation and overall capacity of the early years education community to achieve its goals and to bring about improvement in outcomes for learners
 - We promote fair and balanced reporting of findings, particularly where conflicting evidence is presented
 - We recognise and acknowledge effective work, progress and achievement
 - We provide advice in a supportive and constructive manner and we present *actions advised* designed to support early years settings to engage with our Quality Framework. In this way, we enable setting leaders and practitioners to set and achieve their own goals for high quality provision and practice
 - We provide accessible information for parents and the public about the quality of the early years setting's work and we also provide an assurance of quality for the public.

3. How are inspections carried out?

3.1 Before the inspection visit

Scheduling of inspections

In advance of scheduling an EYEI, the DES Inspectorate liaises with the TUSLA Early Years Inspectorate in order to avoid, as far as is practicable, overlapping inspections or the scheduling of different types of inspections in an early years setting within an unduly short timeframe.

Notice

Normally, an early-years setting will receive prior notice of an EYEI. Typically, two working days' notice will be given. An inspector conducting the inspection (the reporting inspector) provides notice of the EYEI to the manager or lead practitioner of the setting. This is usually by telephone and/or email.

When providing the official notification of the inspection, the reporting inspector outlines the format and structure of the inspection, discusses arrangements for any meetings to be held with the manager and/or practitioner(s) on the inspection day and clarifies any specific issues, including, for example, existing information on the daily routine. The reporting inspector has overall responsibility for the EYEI including the allocation of team roles, the arrangement of meetings and the compilation of the final inspection report.

The DES Inspectorate reserves the right to conduct early-years education inspections without prior notice in a proportion of cases and where an inspection without notification is deemed necessary by the Inspectorate.

Documents

External inspection focuses primarily on the work of the early years setting and the interactions and processes which take place in the course of the normal pre-school day. There is a limited emphasis on documentation. This means that inspectors may request to see and examine documents, which early years settings can reasonably be expected to have available, to support the normal operation of the setting and the delivery of the programme of learning. These can include the parent handbook or other information document(s) for parents, a curriculum statement, planning documents, records of children's progress and an outline of the daily routine.

Meetings

An integral element of the EYEI process is the engagement between the inspector and the staff and management of the early years setting. Typically a pre-inspection meeting is held with the manager⁶ of the setting before the inspection commences in the setting. The reporting inspector, in consultation with the manager, also arranges to hold meetings with representatives of the board of management or management committee, where relevant, and with the staff in the setting. Generally these meetings are part of the evaluation and evidence gathering processes. A post-inspection meeting is also arranged where the findings of the inspection are shared and discussed.

3.2 During the inspection visit

The inspection visit is conducted by one or more inspectors. The inspection model (whether an EYEI or a Follow-Through inspection) and the size of the setting determine the length of time the inspection takes and the activities undertaken in the course of the evaluation. Typically, between one and three days is set aside for this core inspection activity depending on the number of ECCE rooms. This consists of visits to learning environments, meetings with the manager and staff, the review of documents and the provision of feedback.

⁶ The generic term 'manager' is used to refer to the main contact person in the service who has been identified in advance of inspection as the primary decision-maker regarding the organisation and delivery of the service.

On the basis of information provided by the early years setting, the reporting inspector plans the inspection activity, in consultation with the manager and staff in the setting, to minimise disruption to the normal operation of the setting.

Pre-inspection meeting

On arrival, the inspector(s) will present official identification to the manager in the setting. The inspector(s) will hold a short meeting with the manager in order to:

- Outline the inspection process
- Agree the schedule of visits to the various learning environments and the times for the inspectors to hold meetings and collate inspection findings
- Discuss any practical issues that may affect the inspection
- Finalise arrangements for the feedback and discussion meeting with the owner/manager and/or relevant practitioner(s) after the inspection
- Request available planning documents, daily routine and records of children's learning and achievements for review during the inspection
- Gather evidence in relation to management and leadership for learning
- Discuss self-evaluation practices and improvement priorities of the setting.

While the inspection team makes every effort to work within the agreed timeframe for the EYEI, unforeseen events may occasionally extend or alter this timeframe. Where possible, any changes will be discussed with the manager in advance.

Visits to learning environments

The main activity of the education inspection is the observation of the processes and practices relating to children's learning in one or more learning environments that are provided in the early-years setting. The scheduling of inspection visits is at the discretion of the reporting inspector who will indicate to the manager or practitioner which learning environment(s) will be visited during the inspection.

An inspection visit generally takes place during the normal day of the early years setting. Visits to individual learning environments in the setting can range in duration depending on the nature of the activities taking place. The EYEI model provides the opportunity to gather a range of evidence relating to leadership and learning in the work of the early years setting and the quality of learning outcomes for children. This facilitates the triangulation of evidence in order to provide rigorous and robust findings and draw conclusions that contribute towards improvement. The visits typically include:

- Observation of learning activities
- Review of learning environments (both indoors and outdoors)
- Interaction with children and staff
- Review and discussion of available documentation.

Pedagogy and practice in support of children's learning, in any learning environment in the setting, may be observed in the course of the evaluation. This may include the work of temporary staff and support staff who are working in the setting at the time of the inspection visit. In larger settings, this can involve inspection visits to a sample of learning environments. It may also include the work of external personnel who are employed by the setting to provide additional tuition or support to children as a regular feature of the programme of learning.

The inspector, using the *EYEI Quality Framework*, considers the preparation for the programme of learning being offered in the setting, the effectiveness of the pedagogical approaches utilised, the interactions and atmosphere and how children are organised and supported during learning activities.

The inspector evaluates the level to which children's knowledge, skills and dispositions are supported and developed and the extent to which they are engaged appropriately in their learning. Assessment practices and the progress made by children are also examined. The inspector(s) may also interact with children and review samples of their work.

Subsequent to a visit to a learning environment, the inspector will provide the early-years practitioner(s) with feedback. Feedback may be provided directly after the observation visit, or at a time agreed by the inspector and the early-years practitioner(s). Observed good practice is acknowledged and affirmed and, where relevant, advice is given in relation to how provision can be improved or developed further.

Evaluation related meetings

During the course of an EYEI, it may be necessary to hold meetings to gather additional evidence to inform the preparation of the draft report for the setting. Scheduling of such meetings will be discussed, where possible, in advance of the inspection. However, it may be necessary to arrange a meeting during the course of the inspection. In the event that more than one inspector is involved in the EYEI, a meeting will be convened between the inspectors to enable them to discuss their findings and to arrive at an agreed judgement about each of the four areas outlined in the quality framework.

Documents

The main focus of an EYEI is on the quality of the interactions and processes that facilitate children's learning in the early-years setting. Notice of an EYEI does not require the creation of new records or documents. Inspectors review the available planning documentation, including the daily routine used by practitioners to support the normal everyday practices in the setting. This information helps inspectors to evaluate the breadth, balance and developmental nature of the curriculum and the learning experiences that are provided for the children. Inspectors also review the records of children's learning experiences and achievements that are available in the setting, in order to develop an understanding of the children's learning progress. Opportunities are provided for the early-years practitioner(s) to discuss relevant documentation with the inspector(s).

Evaluating professional practice

While EYEI evaluations involve review of the professional practice of practitioners and the quality of education provision in the early-years setting inspected, the inspection process is not a professional competence inspection.⁷ However, where an inspector has serious concerns about the quality of provision in a learning environment, those concerns will be shared with the manager and the relevant practitioner(s) as part of the feedback provided. Where concerns relate to management and/or leadership in the setting, they are shared by the inspector(s) with the person/body named on the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) registration documentation as the owner or responsible body.

Child Protection

If deficiencies in respect of a setting's compliance with *National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017*⁸ come to the attention of a DES inspector in the course of an early-years education inspection, the inspector will, in the spirit of that guidance, alert the management of the early-years setting to the deficiencies noted and will report the matter to TUSLA.

⁷ This relates to the fact that the DES Inspectorate currently conducts probationary visits to newly qualified primary school teachers as part of the requirements for professional registration with the Teaching Council. There is no such professional registration process in place for early years practitioners

⁸ DCYA (2017) *National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017*

Where a child protection concern is brought to the attention of the inspector(s) during an education inspection in an early-years setting, the DES inspector(s) will follow DES procedures for reporting on child protection matters. This procedure is set out in the *Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Concerns brought to the Attention of Staff Employed by the Department of Education and Skills* (Updated February 2017).

3.3 Following the inspection visit

Post-inspection feedback meeting

At the conclusion of the inspection, the inspector(s) will communicate the draft findings to the manager of the early-years setting and, where available, to the practitioner(s) in the learning environments inspected and to members of the management board or committee. This feedback meeting is an important part of the inspection process. It allows for communication of the main draft findings of the inspection and provides further opportunities for clarification of any information and for discussion about how the early-years setting can develop through implementing the *actions advised* in the inspection feedback.

During this meeting, the inspector(s) seek to:

- Acknowledge and affirm effective practice
- Provide an evaluation of education provision in the learning environments inspected with reference to the quality continuum (Section 6 - Table 1)
- Identify areas for development and improvement and advise, as relevant, on the actions advised to bring about improvement
- Provide an opportunity for the manager and other practitioner(s) present to discuss and respond to the findings
- Outline the process leading to the publication of the report.



The inspection report

A draft inspection report is finalised following the completion of the feedback meeting. The report presents the main findings and *actions advised* of the evaluation. It is processed through the normal quality assurance procedures of the Inspectorate and is issued to the setting for factual verification and later for setting response, as prescribed in *Publication of School Inspection Reports: Guidelines* (Department of Education and Skills, 2015)⁹.

When the EYEI report is issued for *factual verification*, the manager and chairperson of the management board, where appropriate, have the opportunity to draw the attention of the Inspectorate to any statements in the draft report with they believe to be errors of fact. Subsequently, the reporting inspector makes any necessary amendments to the report and it is issued to the early years setting for *Setting Response* (SR). The management of the early years setting has an opportunity to submit a written response to the report, outlining what it will do to address the *actions advised* in the report. The finalised report and the early years setting response are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills (www.education.ie).

Publication of the inspection report

The finalised report and the response of the early years setting are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills (www.education.ie). To access an EYEI or a Follow-through (FT) report on any service the steps below should be followed:

- > Insert www.education.ie into the web browser toolbar
- > Scroll down the page to the light blue box on the left hand side of the web page titled 'Popular Topics'. Click on the School Inspection Reports link
- > Under 'Forms of Inspection' click on the link for either Early Years Education-focused Inspection (EYEI) or Follow-Through (FT) Inspection
- > Insert the DCYA reference number into the School Roll Number box in the search field or, alternatively, insert the Early Years setting name and address into the relevant fields and click on search.

(See appendix 3 for a step-by-step guide to the processing of EYEI Reports for publication.)

⁹ *Publication of School Inspection Reports: Guidelines* Inspectorate, Department of Education and Skills (2015)

4. Acting on the inspection report

The manager/lead practitioner of the early-years setting should, as part of the agenda for continuing improvement in the setting, carefully consider the findings and *actions advised* in the EYEI report (as a staff team) and should plan for the implementation of those actions. The EYEI report along with other types of information gathered by the early-years setting can also be used to inform self-evaluation processes in the setting and planning for improvement and development.

Responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the *actions advised* and improvements in an EYEI report rests mainly with the management of the setting¹⁰. In some cases, early years settings may wish to access the assistance available from early-years mentoring services and other sources of advice when planning and implementing improvements. The degree to which progress has been made on the implementation of the *actions advised* in an EYEI report may be evaluated at a later date in Follow-through inspections by the DES Inspectorate (See Appendix 2 for further details).

5. The Quality Framework for Early Years Education

Early-years education inspections are based on a quality framework that is informed by the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and *Síolta: the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education* as well as national and international research related to early childhood education and care and inspection. The quality framework incorporates the key elements of best practice in early education and care and categorises provision under four broad areas:

Area 1 - Quality of the context to support children's learning and development

Area 2 - Quality of the processes to support children's learning and development

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

Area 4 - Quality of management and leadership for learning.

¹⁰ The term 'management' is used to refer to the responsible authority capable of leading and authorising actions in support of quality improvement within the early years service. This may include the Owner, Manager, members of a Board of Management or Management Committee.

In table 1 below, twenty key outcomes are identified, under four broad areas, which describe aspects of best practice in early childhood education and care.

Table 1: Overview of the Quality Framework for Early-years Education Inspections in Early Years Settings Participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme

Area	Outcome
Area 1 - Quality of context to support children's learning and development	1. The atmosphere and organisation of the setting nurture children's learning and development and support the inclusion of all children
	2. Relationships are warm, responsive, respectful and reciprocal
	3. Children's sense of identity and belonging is nurtured
Area 2 - Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	4. Provision is informed by <i>Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework</i>
	5. Information about the children's development informs next steps in learning
	6. High quality interactions with children are facilitated
	7. The environment and resources support children's learning and development
	8. Play is central to children's learning and development
	9. Emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills are fostered
	10. Provision for children's learning and development is closely aligned to their interests and developing capabilities
	11. Children learn in an inclusive environment
Area 3 - Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	12. Children demonstrate engagement and enjoyment in their learning and a positive sense of well-being
	13. Children experience achievement and are developing through their learning experiences
	14. Children are developing a sense of identity and belonging and personal and social skills to support their learning and development
	15. Children communicate their experiences, thoughts, ideas and feelings with others in a variety of ways
	16. Children make sense of their world by interacting with others and the environment through playing, investigating and questioning
Area 4 - Quality of management and leadership for learning	17. Planning, review and evaluation are informed by <i>Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education</i>
	18. Management in the setting provides for a high quality learning and development experience for children
	19. Clear two-way channels of communication are fostered between the early years setting, parents, families and children
	20. Transitions into, from and within the setting are managed effectively to support children's learning and development

To ensure optimum transparency for early-years practitioners about the focus of the inspections, each outcome has been further described through the use of a number of possible signposts for practice (Appendix 1). The signposts for practice are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. It is acknowledged that there are different approaches among early-years practitioners and setting providers; and that staff are at different stages in the development of their practice. It is not expected that all signposts will be evident in a given setting.

Inspectors engage in professional dialogue with practitioners about a selection of outcomes and signposts for practice during the inspection visit. Inspectors' judgements about the quality of provision in each of the four areas are informed by their observation of activities organised and facilitated by the practitioner(s) on the day of the inspection.

6. The Quality Continuum

In analysing and reporting on their findings in respect of each of the four broad areas, inspectors use a quality continuum with five quality bands as illustrated at *Table 1* below.

Table 1: The quality continuum

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Excellent	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.
Very good	Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.
Good	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.
Fair	Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.
Poor	Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.

7. Review of inspections

A practitioner or manager of an early-years setting affected by an inspection may seek a review of the inspection in accordance with the procedures outlined in *Procedures for Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers under Section 13(9) of the Education Act (1998) (Revised 2015)* (www.education.ie).

8. Publication and revision of this guide

This Guide has been prepared following consultation with early-years practitioners, academics, parents, organisations that provide support to early years settings, and other stakeholders with an interest in early-years education, in accordance with Section 13(8) of the Education Act, 1998. It has been approved for issue by the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.

The Inspectorate is committed to improving the ways in which it carries out its evaluation and advisory work in early years settings and the provisions of this Guide will be reviewed periodically.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Quality Framework for EYEI incorporating Signposts for Practice¹¹

Area 1 - Quality of context to support children’s learning and development

Outcome	Signposts for Practice: Consider the extent to which..
1. The atmosphere and organisation of the setting nurtures children’s learning and development and supports the inclusion of all children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A caring ethos and a warm, affirming atmosphere are evident ■ Routines and procedures consistently promote children’s physical, social and emotional security, together with their learning and development ■ It is evident that children are active agents in choosing and organising their learning and development activities ■ Snack/meal time is seen as a social occasion and an opportunity to promote well-being and a healthy lifestyle ■ Children are supported to become confident and independent in managing their own self-help and self-care needs ■ Times of transition within the setting support positive learning experiences for children ■ Transitions within the setting are managed effectively and promote continuity in learning throughout the day
2. Relationships are responsive, respectful and reciprocal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Practitioners show sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families ■ Practitioners foster caring and respectful child-child relationships ■ Secure relationships are fostered between children and key practitioners in the setting ■ Parents are aware of who their child’s key practitioner is ■ Practitioners model and provide guidance and encouragement towards positive behaviour ■ Recognition, affirmative feedback and encouragement are a regular feature of the responses to children

¹¹ These signposts have been informed by *Aistear* and *Sólta*. The lists are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive.

Outcome	Signposts for Practice: Consider the extent to which...
3. Children’s sense of identity and belonging is nurtured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Respect for and recognition of the uniqueness of each child is evident ■ Practice is child-centred, respectful and culturally appropriate ■ Opportunities are provided for children to develop an appreciation of themselves as individuals and as members of groups ■ Opportunities are provided which bring together children, families and practitioners in the setting ■ Diversity is recognised, valued and affirmed within an inclusive learning environment ■ The setting has made connections and is integrated with the local community ■ Children have opportunities to get to know people and places within their community

Area 2 – Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development

Outcome	Signposts for Practice: Consider the extent to which...
4. Provision is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A broad-based curriculum, informed by Aistear, has been documented and is being used to support children’s learning and development ■ Practitioners in the setting have been involved in the development of an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum and demonstrate knowledge, understanding and confidence about putting these plans into practice ■ Planning takes account of children’s varying interests, cultural backgrounds, strengths, needs and previous learning experiences ■ There is a planned approach to developing children’s dispositions, values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding ■ Plans are flexible enough to allow for response to children’s emergent interests ■ Planning supports the provision of a connected, holistic learning experience for children using assessment for learning methods to promote the progression of their next steps in learning ■ Planning for curriculum implementation is organised on long-term, medium-term and short-term bases ■ The implementation of the curriculum is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis

Outcome	Signposts for Practice: Consider the extent to which...
5. Information about the children's development informs next steps in learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A variety of assessment approaches is used to gather information about children's learning experiences and achievements ■ Assessment for learning approaches are used to inform and progress the next steps in children's learning experiences and ensure continuity in their learning ■ Information about children's learning is regularly documented to build a rich picture of children's learning and development ■ Children are regularly provided with appropriate formative feedback to extend their learning and development ■ Parents are consulted regularly and informed about their child's learning and development
6. High quality interactions with children are facilitated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The child is viewed as a competent and confident learner The child is recognised as an active agent in his/her learning ■ Children are supported and encouraged to learn with and alongside others ■ There is an appropriate balance between adult-initiated and child-initiated learning and development activities ■ The practitioner knows the child well and responds to his/her interests and individual learning needs sensitively and appropriately ■ The practitioner actively extends children's thinking and language learning during play (Sustained shared thinking) ■ The practitioner engages and motivates the child in his/her learning and development in a respectful and caring way ■ The practitioner uses a range of appropriate interaction strategies and methodologies to facilitate a broad range of learning experiences ■ The practitioner promotes peer interactions in pairs and small groups to nurture supportive relationships
7. The environment and resources support children's wellbeing, learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indoor and outdoor environments are well maintained, safe and inviting ■ Indoor and outdoor environments are purposefully structured and organised to develop children's curiosity, creativity, imagination and desire for exploration ■ Indoor and outdoor environments and resources are used effectively to stimulate, support, consolidate and extend children's learning ■ Children have frequent access to outdoor learning environments. Resources are accessible, developmentally appropriate, and provide for multi-sensory learning experiences. ■ The setting has a variety of literacy and numeracy/mathematical resources which are used regularly and purposefully

Outcome	Signposts for Practice: Consider the extent to which...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children’s ideas and achievements are creatively displayed and accessible to children and parents ■ Children make choices around their engagement with environments, resources and activities ■ The environments are used to develop children’s physical fitness and gross and fine motor skills ■ The environment encourages children to build the capacity for self-regulation and resilience through the provision of opportunities for appropriate risk taking ■ The environment is structured to ensure children learn in a variety of contexts throughout the day
8. Play is central to children’s learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Play is the central medium through which children learn and develop within the setting ■ Time for extended, open-ended play is allowed for within the setting. ■ There are regular opportunities for children to plan for, talk about and think about their play experiences ■ Opportunities are provided for a variety of types of play, including creative play, language play, physical play, imaginative play, socio-dramatic play and construction play ■ Play opportunities are freely available, accessible, appropriate and well-resourced to sustain purposeful learning. The importance of spontaneous play is recognised. Play is used as a medium for children to interact with, explore and make sense of the world ■ Children have opportunities to engage in play activities alone, with peers and/or with practitioners ■ The practitioner effectively facilitates play, leads play, directs play and joins in as a play partner in order to effectively support children’s learning and development ■ Play enables purposeful learning, creative expression and development for all children in accordance with their needs and interests
9. Emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills are fostered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Practitioners model appropriate language, including mathematical language, and encourage an expanded use of vocabulary through the use of open-ended questioning and language enrichment during interactions ■ Practitioners ensure there is a suitable balance between speaking and listening during interactions ■ Children are encouraged and supported to express their views, emotions and thinking in a range of ways

Outcome	Signposts for Practice: Consider the extent to which...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children’s home language(s) is/are valued and affirmed and are visible within a print-rich environment ■ Children regularly enjoy and share a variety of rhymes, jingles, poems and songs ■ Children have access to high-quality books, linked to their interests and play areas, and are provided with regular opportunities to listen to and explore stories ■ Opportunities are provided for children to engage in mark-making ■ Mathematical thinking and learning is promoted through the use of open-ended resources and games, linked to the everyday lives of children ■ It is evident that children have opportunities to engage with activities that build early positive dispositions towards science, technology engineering, the arts and mathematics (STEAM)
<p>10. Provision for children’s learning and development is closely aligned to their interests and developing capabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Planning for children’s learning and development builds on the interests, previous experiences and achievements of children ■ Practitioners set high but realistic expectations for all children in the setting ■ Children are challenged and learn strategies for active exploration, thinking and reasoning ■ Opportunities are provided for children to achieve fulfilment, success and mastery during learning activities ■ Children are enabled and supported to make connections in their learning and to transfer their knowledge and skills to new learning situations ■ Children are encouraged and supported to respond creatively as they engage in learning ■ Children discover different ways to express their creativity and individuality ■ Learning activities provide progressively more complex, varied and challenging experiences for children in accordance with their individual needs and abilities
<p>11. Children learn in an inclusive environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are equitable opportunities to engage all children in learning irrespective of gender, ability, age, ethnicity or background. ■ An inclusive approach is adopted to ensure the engagement of all children within the setting ■ Children experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures ■ Practitioners recognise and accommodate diversity in the style, pace and focus of children’s learning and development

Outcome	Signposts for Practice: Consider the extent to which...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="432 282 1390 394">■ Specific attention is paid to the learning of children with additional needs, children who have English as an additional language, minority groups, and those affected by educational disadvantage <li data-bbox="432 427 1362 495">■ The learning and development of children is fostered in partnership with parents <li data-bbox="432 528 1422 595">■ The setting has made links with external agencies, where appropriate and possible, with a view to optimising support for children with additional needs

Area 3 – Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements

Outcome	Signposts for Practice: Consider the extent to which...
12. Children demonstrate engagement and enjoyment in their learning and a positive sense of well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="432 840 1082 873">■ Children demonstrate enjoyment in their learning <li data-bbox="432 907 1378 940">■ Children are motivated, interested and engaged in their learning activities <li data-bbox="432 974 1337 1008">■ It is evident that children’s voices are heard, respected and acted upon <li data-bbox="432 1041 1422 1153">■ Children display initiative, self-reliance, positive self-esteem and self-confidence and demonstrate positive learning dispositions such as resilience, resourcefulness and persistence <li data-bbox="432 1187 1417 1254">■ Children frequently have choice and make decisions about their learning and during their learning experiences <li data-bbox="432 1288 1433 1355">■ Children are aware of and can name their feelings experienced during learning activities <li data-bbox="432 1388 1406 1422">■ Children demonstrate creativity and a sense of wonder and natural curiosity <li data-bbox="432 1456 1394 1523">■ Children demonstrate a developing capacity to reflect, use judgements and make decisions <li data-bbox="432 1556 1398 1590">■ Children are developing the ability to play cooperatively, in pairs or small groups
13. Children experience achievement and are developing through their learning experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="432 1641 1129 1675">■ Children experience success during learning activities <li data-bbox="432 1709 1437 1776">■ Children regularly discuss or share aspects of their learning achievements with others <li data-bbox="432 1809 1433 1877">■ Children demonstrate an awareness of their changing and developing abilities and can make connections to the past, the present and the future. <li data-bbox="432 1910 1437 2022">■ Information documented about children’s learning reflects their achievements in a range of connected learning experiences appropriate to an early education context

Outcome	Signposts for Practice: Consider the extent to which...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Information documented about children’s learning reflects their development with due regard for their individual interests, needs, approaches and cultural backgrounds ■ Children show increasing confidence and coordination over their gross and fine motor skills ■ Children demonstrate a growing capacity to make healthy choices about nutrition, exercise and personal routines
<p>14. Children are developing a sense of identity and belonging and personal and social skills to support their learning and development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children show an awareness and appreciation of their own uniqueness and have a sense of who they are ■ Children are able to communicate their interests, opinions, feelings, family background and personal experiences ■ Children are developing a positive understanding of their own identity as competent learners ■ Children are developing a positive understanding of their identity as members of families and groups ■ Children have an awareness of their local community and the roles of different people within that community ■ Children show an understanding of and regard for the identity, rights and views of others ■ Children understand the rules and boundaries of acceptable behaviour and demonstrate an evolving capacity for self-regulation and conflict resolution ■ Children are developing personal and social skills which enable them to respond appropriately to different situations e.g. turn-taking, cooperating, negotiating, taking responsibility, building relationships
<p>15. Children communicate their experiences, thoughts, ideas and feelings with others in a variety of ways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children use and interpret non-verbal communication strategies such as making eye contact, gestures and listening ■ Children use language to give and receive information, interpret experiences, ask questions, make requests, refuse, negotiate, solve problems, imagine and recreate roles and to clarify their thinking, ideas and feelings ■ Children interact with other children and adults by listening, discussing, questioning and taking turns in conversations ■ Children appreciate their home language and understand how different languages can be used with different people and in different situations ■ Children express their feelings, thoughts, ideas and creativity through story-telling, making art, mark making, moving to music, role playing and problem solving

Outcome	Signposts for Practice: Consider the extent to which...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children explore sound, pattern, rhythm and repetition in language ■ Children represent their ideas and feelings through various media and play activities ■ Children’s voices are visible within the setting; e.g. documentation of their comments on their artwork or in their learning records. ■ Children demonstrate an awareness and emergent understanding of the meaning and uses of symbols, pictures, print and numbers as a means of communication ■ Children have a growing understanding of the meaning and use of mathematical language ■ Children whose home language is not that predominantly used within the setting have opportunities to communicate and express themselves.
16. Children make sense of their world by interacting with others and their environment through playing, investigating and questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children are inquisitive and confident in exploring and thinking about their learning experiences ■ Children are aware of the natural environment and its features, materials, animals and plants ■ Children engage, explore and experiment in their environment and use their developing physical skills to manipulate objects and diverse materials ■ Children use books and ICT for fun, to gain information and to broaden their understanding of the world ■ Children collaborate with others to share interests and ideas and to solve problems ■ Children make connections and associations between new learning and what they already know and have opportunities to reinforce this learning ■ Children display the capacity to respond to a variety of ‘I wonder why..’ questions

Area 4 - Quality of management and leadership for learning

Outcome	Signposts for Practice: Consider the extent to which...
<p>17. Planning, review and evaluation are informed by <i>Síolta</i>, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Management and staff regularly reflect on and review their practice, policies and procedures in order to improve learning experiences and outcomes for children ■ Self-evaluation and reflection are regularly promoted through the use of <i>Síolta</i>, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education ■ Reflective practices are adopted to support professional learning in the setting and to inform planning, review and improvement practices ■ The Aistear/<i>Síolta</i> Practice Guide is used systematically in the context of self-evaluation ■ An ethos of professionalism, teamwork, collaboration and partnership is evident ■ The views of staff, parents, management and children are regularly sought during self-review processes and are used to inform plans for quality improvement ■ Practitioners avail of mentoring and other external advisory supports, where available ■ It is evident that staff in the setting are aware of relevant research, policy and practice developments that impact on the quality of their work with young children ■ Outcomes of self-review are documented, shared and acted upon to improve children’s learning experiences and achievements
<p>18. Management within the setting provides for a high quality learning and development experience for children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Appropriate systems are in place for the smooth organisation of educational experiences and activities in the setting ■ The stated philosophy and vision of the setting is evident in the practice of all staff ■ There is clarity around the roles and responsibilities of practitioners with regard to educational activities ■ The leader/manager of the setting uses the varied skill sets of staff effectively ■ Staff demonstrate thoughtfulness and reflection in all aspects of their practice ■ Leaders provide a good role model for the staff, promote high standards and articulate a clear vision and direction for the work of the setting ■ Opportunities are provided for regular support and supervision of all staff

Outcome	Signposts for Practice: Consider the extent to which...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Opportunity is provided to each practitioner in the setting to take a leadership role in promoting good quality learning ■ It is evident that practice is informed by evidence-based theory and that staff are knowledgeable about children’s learning and development ■ Effective strategies are in place for professional reflection and for the mentoring, support and continuous professional development of all staff in the setting
19. Clear two-way channels of communication are fostered between the early-years setting, parents, families and children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parents and families are proactively consulted as the primary educators of their child and involved as partners in their child’s learning and development ■ Parents and families are made aware of the policies, procedures and curriculum in operation within the setting ■ The setting regularly shares verbal and documented information on children’s learning and achievements with parents and families in a spirit of openness, mutual respect and transparency ■ There are formal and informal opportunities to exchange information with parents and families and other professionals in the best interests of the child ■ The voice of the child is respected and included during decision making processes that affect them ■ Efforts are made to communicate with parents and families whose first language is not English
20. Transitions into, from and within the setting are managed effectively to support children’s learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Information is gathered from parents, families, other practitioners in the setting and from external services and professionals on children’s prior experiences ■ This knowledge is used to ensure continuity of experiences and progression in learning for children ■ Information is shared between the early-years setting and the primary school to ensure continuity of experiences and progression in children’s learning ■ Policies, procedures and practice have been developed to promote the sensitive management of transitions within and between settings

Appendix 2: Follow-through Inspection Model

Introduction

The purpose of a Follow-through inspection is to evaluate the progress an early years setting has made in implementing the *actions advised* from an earlier inspection where a written report has been published or issued to a setting. This is facilitated through a consultative, co-professional engagement between the inspector and relevant setting management and staff. Inspectors also advise the setting on strategies and actions to enable them to fully address the *actions advised*. Any early years setting that has had an inspection may be scheduled for a follow-through inspection.

Follow-through inspections provide an opportunity for the early years setting to show the progress it has made in improving practice in areas where *actions advised* were identified in previous inspection reports. Inspectors discuss the improvements with individual practitioners and with groups of practitioners and others where appropriate.

At the conclusion of a Follow-through inspection, inspectors discuss their overall findings with the manager/staff, and where relevant, with a representative of a board of management/management committee. They acknowledge the progress made and provide advice on further actions required to ensure the full implementation of each action advised in the original inspection report. The findings from a Follow-through inspection add to the early years setting's own information as they engage in self-evaluation and quality improvement initiatives.

Evaluation focus

Follow-through inspections focus on the level of progress made by the early years setting in implementing specific actions advised outlined in a previous inspection report, rather than the overall educational provision that the early years setting makes. The following continuum indicates the language used when reporting on progress made:

<i>No progress</i>	<i>Partial progress</i>	<i>Good progress</i>	<i>Very good progress</i>
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Where the original EYEI was published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills, the finalised report and the response of the early years setting are also published on the Department's website (www.education.ie). Where the original EYEI was issued to the setting but not published, the Follow-through inspection report will issue to the setting but will not be published.

Acting on the Follow-through Report

To access an EYEI inspection report or a follow-through report on any setting the following steps should be followed:

- > Insert www.education.ie into the web browser toolbar.
- > Scroll down the page to the light blue box on the left hand side of the web page titled 'Popular Topics'. Click on the School Inspection Reports link
- > Under 'Forms of Inspection' click on the link for either Early Years Education-focused Inspection (EYEI) or Follow-through (FT) Inspection
- > Insert the DCYA reference number into the School Roll Number box in the search field or alternatively insert the Early Years setting name and address into the relevant fields and click on search.

Overview of inspection activities: Follow-through Inspection

Before the inspection visit	Inspectorate activity	The inspector contacts the manager two days in advance of the inspection. Arrangements are made for any meeting which may be required and for any documentation which the inspector may wish to view.
	Early Years setting activity	The manager prepares any documents and arranges meetings that may be required
During the inspection visit	Inspectorate activity	Among the activities that may take place in the course of a Follow-through inspection are:
	Typically one day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meeting with manager and/or representative of the board/management committee ■ Meeting with relevant practitioners/members of staff ■ Observation of pedagogy and learning and other relevant activities ■ Interaction with children ■ Review of setting documentation, records and children’s work ■ Review of resources and facilities ■ Post-evaluation meeting with manager
After the inspection visit	Setting activity	Draft report is issued to the manager/other designated person for factual verification (five working days) and for setting response (ten working days)
	Inspectorate activity	Publication of the Follow-through Inspection report on the website of the Department of Education and Skills

Appendix 3: Step-by-step guide to the publication of inspection reports

Step 1 Preparation of the Inspection Report

The inspection report is prepared following completion of the evaluation work in an early years setting. Normally, the evaluation work concludes with oral feedback on the findings and *actions advised* arising from the inspection. This feedback may be provided to staff in the setting, and/or to the manager, and/or to representatives of a management board/committee.

The Inspectorate then completes the draft inspection report. The draft report is subjected to the Inspectorate's normal quality assurance mechanisms.

Step 2 Draft inspection report issued for Factual Verification (FV)

The Inspectorate Secretariat sends a copy of the draft report, accompanied by a factual verification (FV) form (see below) to the email address of the designated contact person, as agreed with the early years setting during the inspection.

The designated contact person is invited to draw the attention of the Inspectorate to any errors of fact in the inspection report, using the factual verification form. The form is returned to the Inspectorate Secretariat by the designated contact person within five working days of the date of issue of the report.

The factual verification form, when returned to the Inspectorate Secretariat by the designated contact person, is referred to the reporting inspector and the appropriate assistant chief inspector. If any errors of fact are drawn to the attention of the Inspectorate, the report may be amended, as necessary, normally within five working days.

If no response is received in respect of factual verification within five working days of the issue of the report, it is assumed that the setting is satisfied that the report is accurate. The report is then prepared for issue to the setting for setting response (SR).

Step 3 Finalised inspection report issued to the early years setting

The Inspectorate Secretariat sends a copy of the finalised report, via email, to the designated contact person. On receiving the inspection report, it is advised that a copy of the report is shared with all staff and management in the early years setting who participated in and/or were otherwise involved in the inspection:

Step 4 Setting Response (SR)

The purpose of the setting response is

- to allow the management/staff of the setting to respond to, and make observations on, the **contents** of the inspection report
- to allow management/staff of the setting to set out **the actions that the early-years setting has taken or plans to take** to address each of the actions advised in the report in the context of their plans for self-evaluation, planning, and improvement in the quality of their provision and practice.

Where the early years setting chooses to provide a setting response to the Inspectorate, the response is completed by using the pro-forma Inspection Report Setting Response Form (see page 33).

Setting Response: Options available

Any of the following actions may be taken when the finalised report is issued to the designated contact person for setting response:

OPTION A

The early years setting may accept the report without comment and record this intention by returning the proforma *inspection report response form* to the Inspectorate **within ten working days** of the date of issue of the inspection report.

OPTION B

The early years setting may respond formally to the findings and *actions advised* of the report by using the proforma *inspection report response form*. This must be done **within ten working days** of the date of issue of the inspection report. Normally, if the management board or committee exercises this option, the setting response is included as an appendix to the published report.

OPTION C

The early years setting may request a formal review of the inspection under the *Procedure for Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers under Section 13 (9) of the Education Act, 1998*.

As a suggested guide, the total length of the setting response is approximately 500 words. Restrictions governing the content of the inspection report will also apply to the setting response. For example, individuals such as practitioners, children, members of the board of management and inspectors may not be named in the setting response. The setting response is an opportunity for the early years setting to comment on the **contents** of the report and to highlight the **follow-up actions** which it proposes to take (or has already taken) following the inspection. Comments on the inspection process may not be included in the setting response. (If the management or staff of the early years setting has concerns about the way in which the inspection was conducted, the *Procedure for Review*, should be used to bring their concern to the attention of the Inspectorate).

Other than in exceptional circumstances, the setting response will be published in its entirety, with the exception of the signature of the owner/manager, at the same time and in the same format as the inspection report. If, for any exceptional reason, the Department decides not to publish the setting response, the Inspectorate will inform the early years setting of this decision and the reason or reasons for it.

Step 5 Publication

If the early years setting has exercised option A or option B as described above, the Inspectorate will publish the inspection report. Usually, publication takes place within ten working days of the receipt of the completed Inspection Report Setting Response Form from the setting.

If the early years setting has sought a review of the inspection or the inspection report (or both), the Inspectorate adheres to the *Procedure for Review of Inspections on Schools and Teachers under Section 13 (9) of the Education Act, 1998*. The inspection report will not be published until the review has been completed and, if appropriate, any recommendations arising from the review have been addressed. On the completion of this process the publication of the final inspection report proceeds in accordance with option A or B above.

The Inspectorate publishes the inspection report and the setting response (if relevant) on the website of the Department of Education and Skills (www.education.ie). Where the initial inspection report was not subject to publication the FT Report is issued to the setting but is not published.

No response received

If a response is not received from the designated contact person(s) of the setting, and if option C has not been availed of within the time limit (ten working days from the date of issue of the report to the setting), a null response is assumed and the report is published by the Inspectorate within a further five working days.

Inspection Report Factual Verification Form (FV)

Setting name	
Setting address	
Setting DCYA ID number	
Setting email address	
Type of inspection	Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI) or Follow-through Inspection
Date of issue of Report for FV	
For office use	

Factual inaccuracies in the report

Please use the space below to draw the attention of the Inspectorate to any factual inaccuracy that you believe is included in the draft inspection report issued to your setting. Alternatively, please supply details on an attached sheet.

Page	Inaccuracies

This form must be signed and returned to eyereports@education.gov.ie **within five working days** of the date of issue of the draft report to the early years setting (**i.e. insert date here**).

Signature

Print name:
Signature:
Role in the Early Years Setting:
Date:

Return address:

Completed forms can be scanned and sent to:

eyereports@education.gov.ie

Or posted to:

EYEI Reports, Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough St., Dublin 1 D01 RC96

Inspection Report Setting Response Form (SR)

Setting Name:	
Setting address:	
Setting DCYA ID number:	
Type of inspection:	
Date of issue of report for SR:	
For Office Use	

Please choose option A, or B, or C

OPTION A	I/We accept the report as the final inspection report and do not wish to respond formally to the report	
OPTION B	I/We accept the report as the final inspection report and wish to respond formally to the report. I/We agree that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the report. The response is submitted below.	
OPTION C	I/We do not accept the report as the final inspection report and request a review of the inspection in accordance with the published procedures of the Department of Education and Skills for the review of inspections. I/We will submit/have submitted a written request for a review to the Office of the Chief Inspector.	

Setting response: Part A

Please comment on the **content** of the inspection report (approximately 100-150 words) and note that comments on the inspection process may not be included in the setting response – see Step 4, Appendix 3.

[100-150 words approx.]

Setting Response: Part B

Please indicate **the actions that the early-years setting has taken or plans to take** to address each of the actions advised in the report (approximately 350 - 400 words)

[350-400 words approx.]

This form must be signed and returned to eyereports@education.gov.ie **within ten working days** of the date of issue of the final report to the early years setting (**i.e. insert date here**). **Return address:**

Print name:

Signature:

Role in the Early Years Setting:

Date:

Completed forms can be scanned and sent to:

eyereports@education.gov.ie

Or posted to:

EYEI Reports, Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough St, Dublin 1 D01 RC96



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