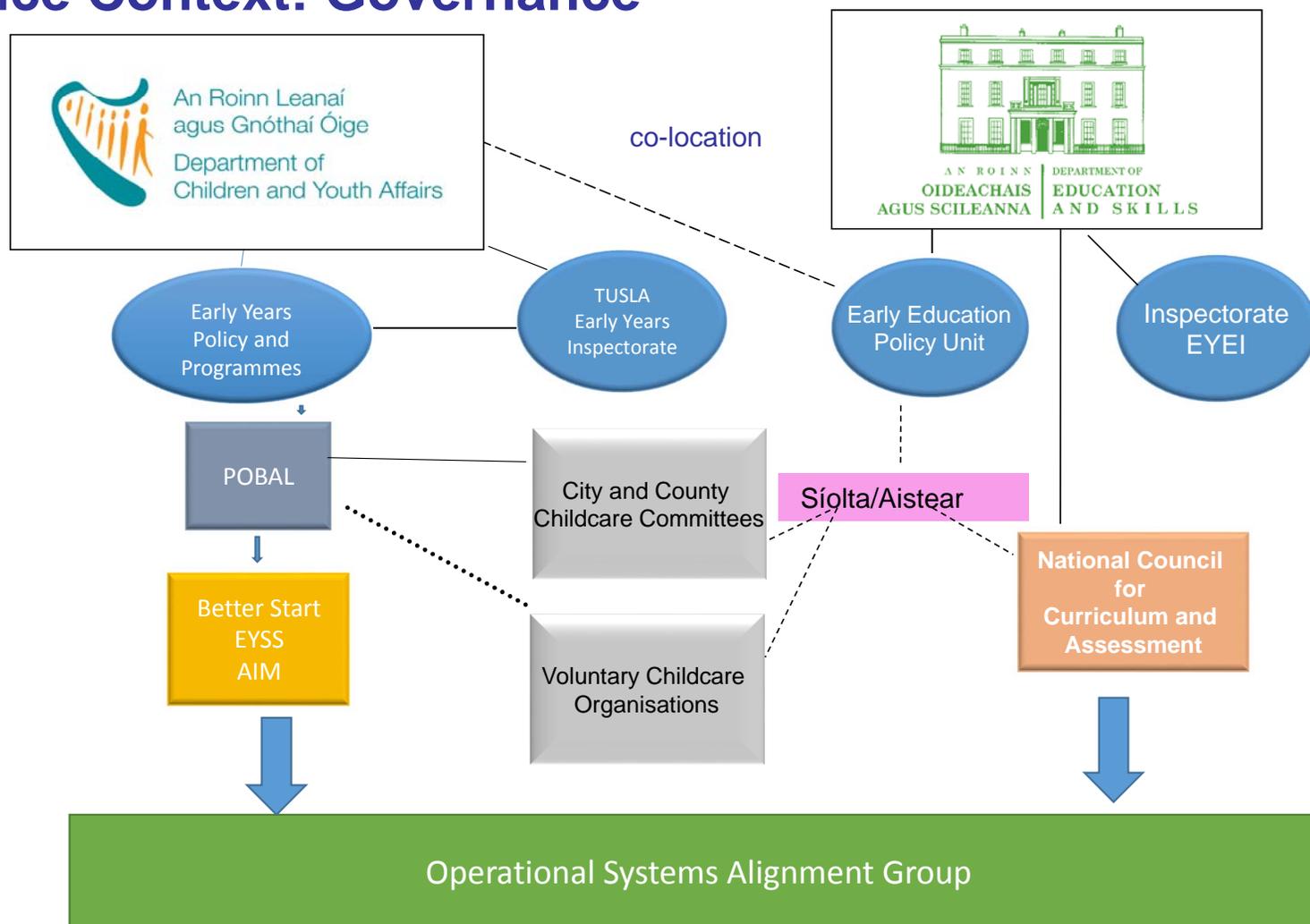# Early Years Education-focused Inspection
Together towards Quality

Dr. Maresa Duignan

Assistant Chief Inspector

Monica Cassidy

Early Years Inspector
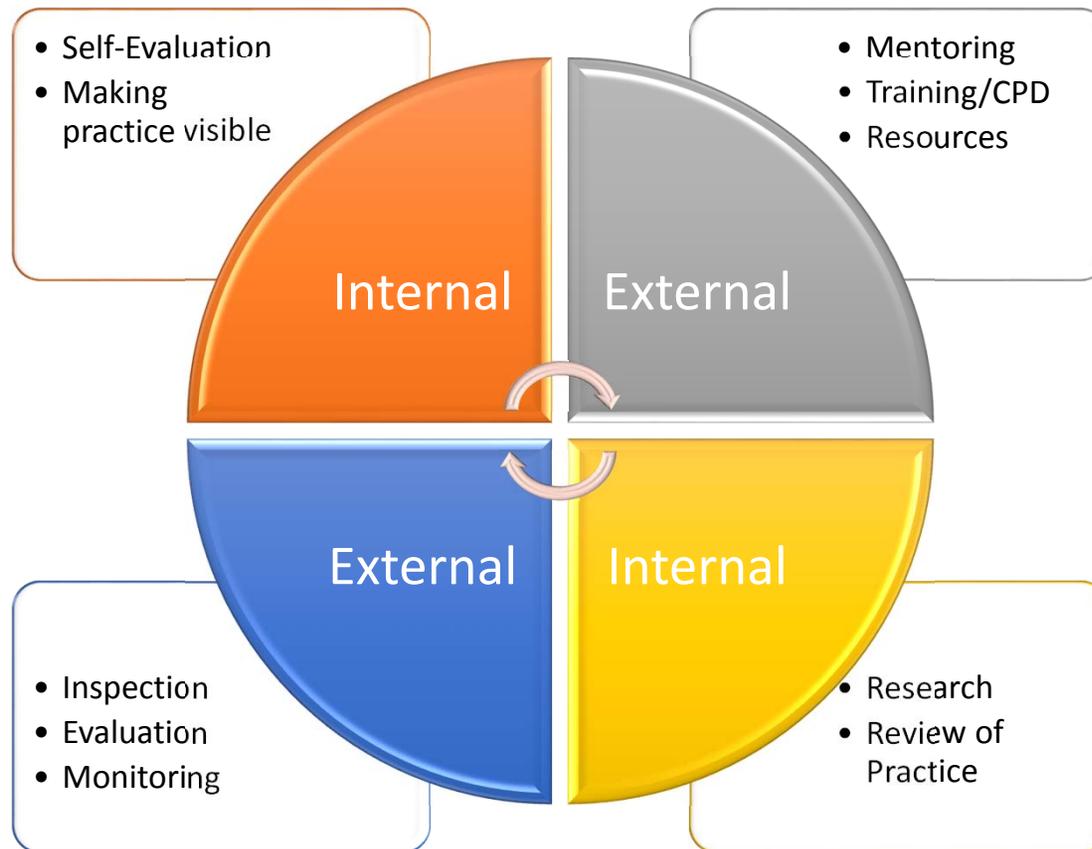
Development to date…

➢Budget 2014 – DCYA commission DES to develop Education focused inspection

➢November 2015 – Early Years Inspectors appointed in DES

➢April 2016 Minister of education and Minister for Children sign off on EYEI model

➢14 April 2016: Early-years education-focused inspections (EYEI) began

➢April – June 2016: 182 EYEIs conducted

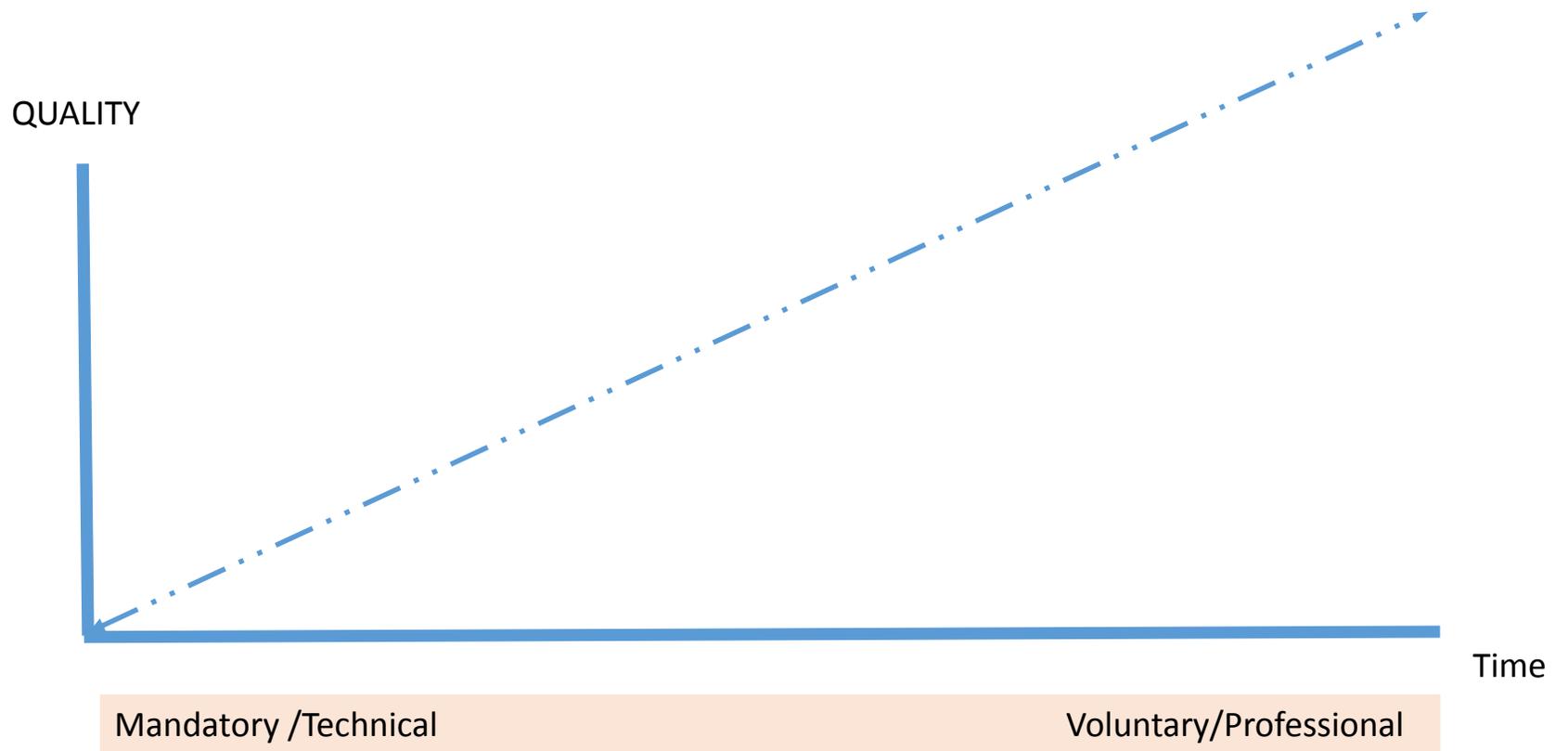➢30 June 2016: first EYEI reports published (44)

➢12 September: EYEI re-commenced

Practice Context: Governance

An Roinn Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of Children and Youth Affairs

co-location

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Early Years Policy and Programmes

TUSLA Early Years Inspectorate

Early Education Policy Unit

Inspectorate EYEI

POBAL

City and County Childcare Committees

Síolta/Aistear

Better Start EYSS AIM

Voluntary Childcare Organisations

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

Operational Systems Alignment Group

The ingredients of quality improvement

Quality Improvement Continuum

QUALITY

Time

Mandatory /Technical   Voluntary/Professional

- https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluation-Reports-Guidelines/A-Guide-to-Early-years-Education-focused-Inspection-EYEI-in-Early-years-Settings-Participating-ECCE-Programme.pdf

A Guide to Early-years Education-focused Inspection (EYEI) in Early-years Settings Participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme

June 2016
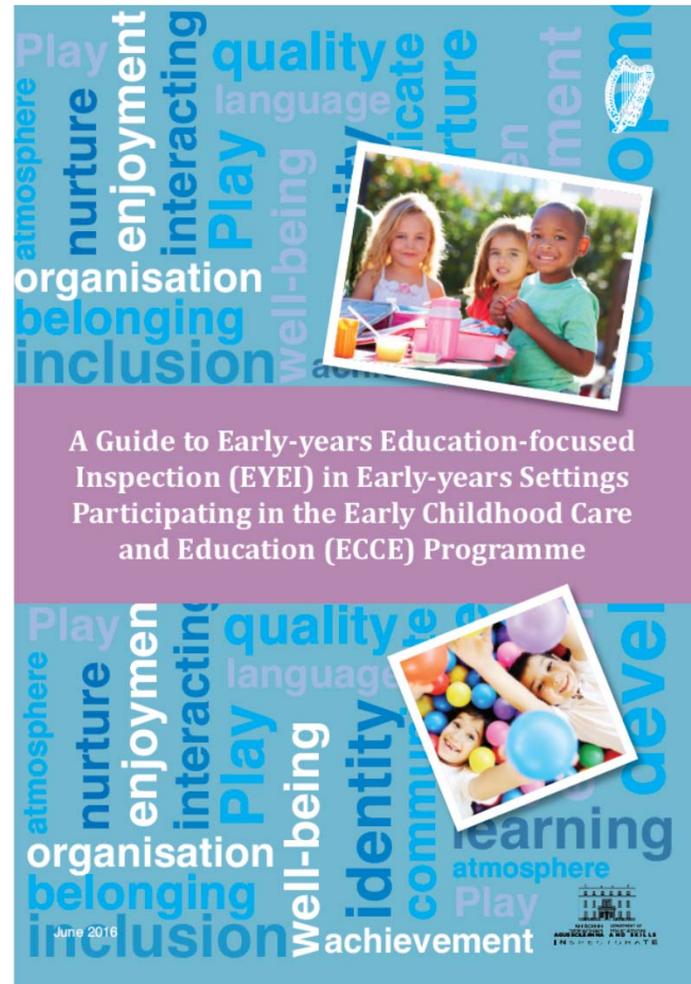
A focus on process quality …

- Promoting children's well-being, learning and development with special attention to:
  - Relationships – respectful and reciprocal (parents, staff and children)
  - Interactions – purposeful, varied and empowering
  - Creating a strong sense of identity and belonging for all
  - Pedagogy – curriculum, strategies, assessment and documentation
- The role of the professional reflective adult
  - Initial and continuing professional education and training
  - Mindful and reflective in practice
  - Valued, supported and rewarded

A focus on improvement

- Identify and affirm good practice

- Support self-evaluation and review processes in the settings

- Provide advice and support to EY practitioners about how children's learning can be developed

- Complement other national measures to support improvement; work collaboratively with other groups and agencies in EY sector to support practitioners in a cohesive, practical way

- Provide information to the public, including parents – Publication - a catalyst for improvement (Di Maggio & Powell 1983)

Improvement through professional engagement

- Engage with practitioners in a spirit of trust and respect
  - Effective educational change requires a 'hearts and minds' approach (McNab 2004)

- Foster professional conversations that promote reflection and change
  - External inspection is most likely to be effective when based on collaboration, collegiality, and a sense of shared experience between the inspector and those inspected (Whitby 2010)

We are committed to:

Transparency

Fairness

Consistency

DES Inspectorate

Clear and sensitive communication

Co-professional dialogue

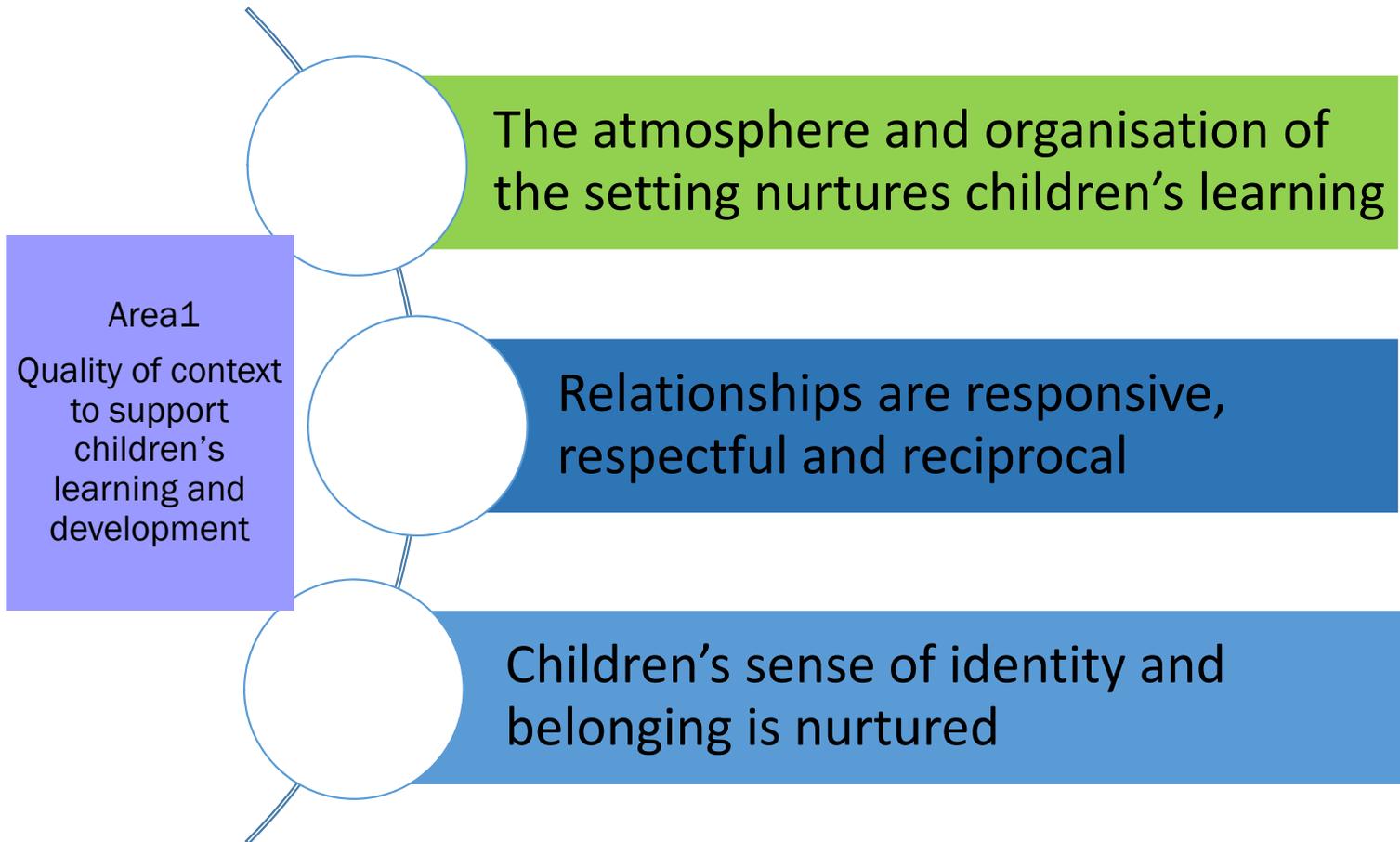Positive professional relationships & partnership

The quality framework

➢ EYEIs – based on a quality framework informed by *Aistear*, *Síolta*, national and international research

➢ A strong framework – clearly and practically articulated

➢ Illustrates what effectiveness in EY provision looks like

➢ Makes clear the focus of EYEI inspections

➢ Informs both internal review, reflection and developmental processes as well as the external inspection process

➢ *Inspection systems that set clear expectations regarding what constitutes 'effective provision' for settings and their stakeholders are strong determinants of improvement actions (Gustafsson et al 2013)*
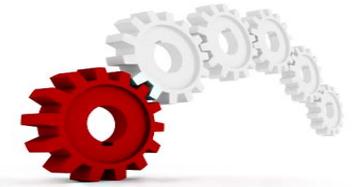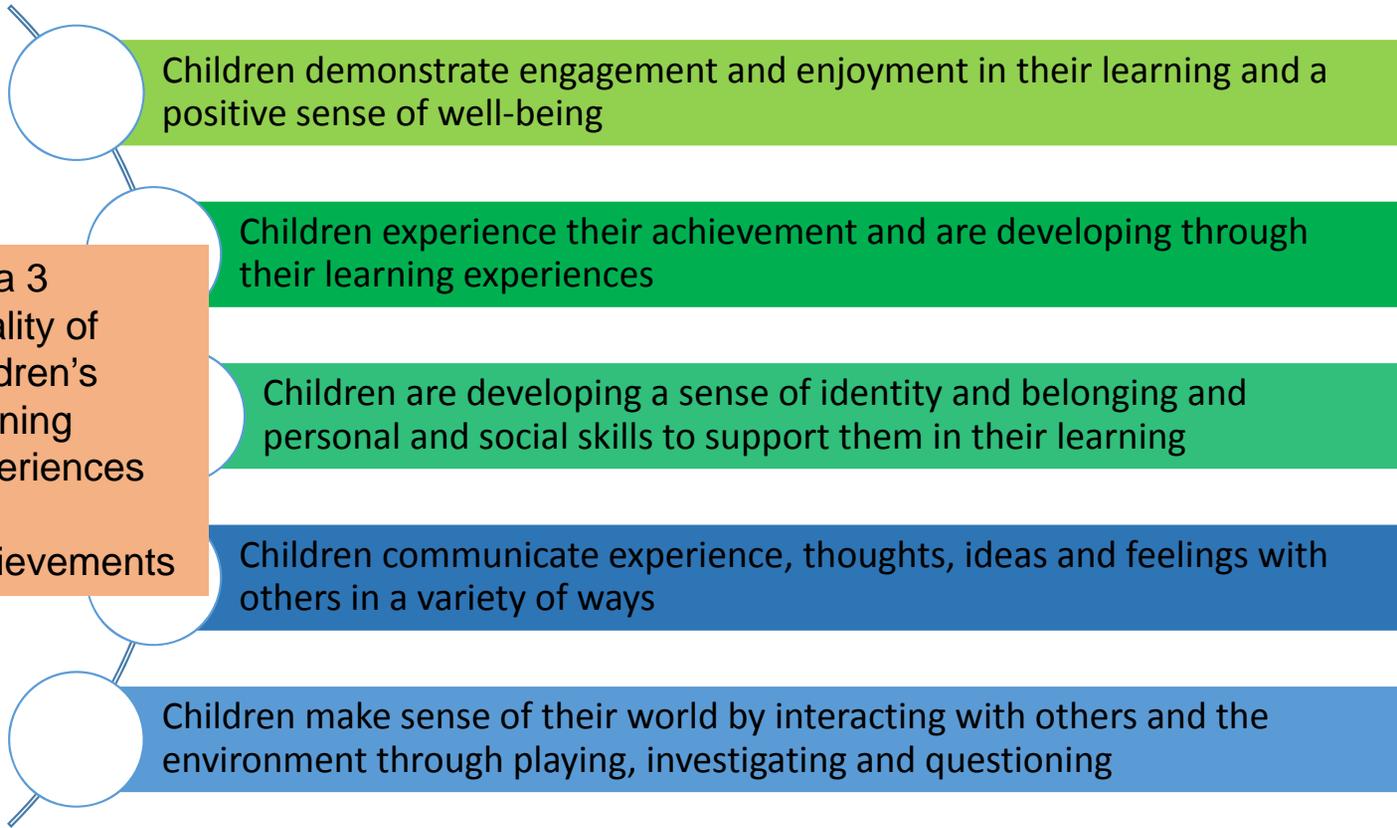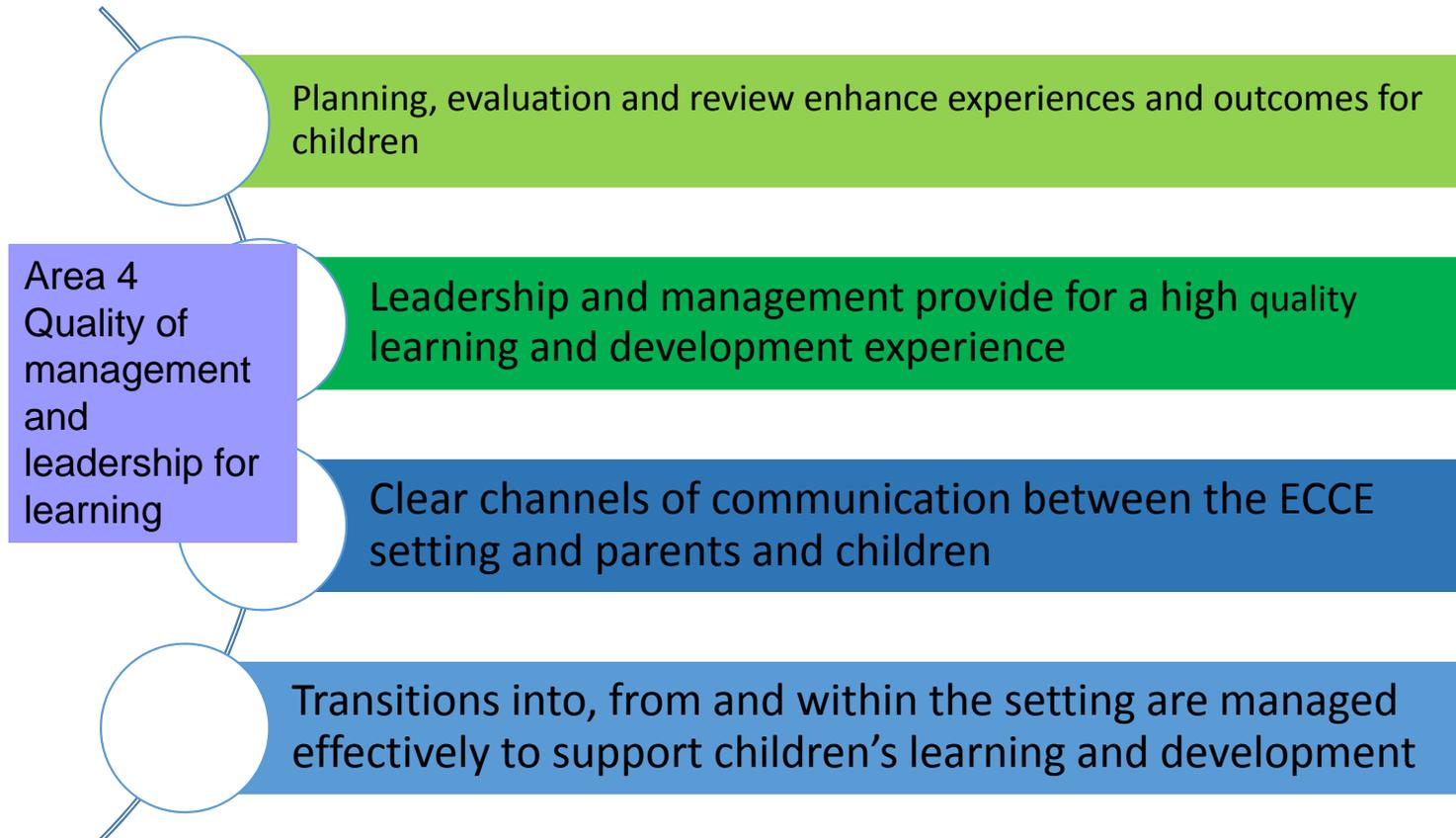
The quality framework

➢Strong focus on play

➢Categorises provision under four broad areas:

    o Quality of context to support children's learning and development
    o Quality of processes to support children's learning and development
    o Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements
    o Quality of management and leadership for learning

➢Key outcomes are identified for each area

➢Each outcome further elaborated through 'signposts for practice'

Area1

Quality of context to support children's learning and development

The atmosphere and organisation of the setting nurtures children's learning

Relationships are responsive, respectful and reciprocal

Children's sense of identity and belonging is nurtured

13

Provision is informed by *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*

Information about the children's development informs the next steps in learning

High quality interactions with children are facilitated

The environment and resources support children's learning and development

Area 2 Quality of process to support children's learning and development

Play is central to children's learning and development

Emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills are fostered

Provision for children's learning and development is closely aligned to their interests and developing capabilities

Children learn within an inclusive environment

Area 3 Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements

Children demonstrate engagement and enjoyment in their learning and a positive sense of well-being

Children experience their achievement and are developing through their learning experiences

Children are developing a sense of identity and belonging and personal and social skills to support them in their learning

Children communicate experience, thoughts, ideas and feelings with others in a variety of ways

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

Planning, evaluation and review enhance experiences and outcomes for children

Leadership and management provide for a high quality learning and development experience

Clear channels of communication between the ECCE setting and parents and children

Transitions into, from and within the setting are managed effectively to support children's learning and development

The Inspection Process

- Before
  - Selection of early years settings
  - Notification
  - Authorisation
- During
  - Initial meeting with leader/staff to introduce setting/inspection process
  - Observation of practice
  - Feedback with leader and staff
- After
  - Draft report
  - Factual verification
  - Setting response
  - Publication

Using the quality framework – the inspection process

➢Inspectors observe:
- o Quality of staff interaction and engagement with children
- o Opportunities for children to communicate and express their own ideas
- o Opportunities for children to learn through play
- o Extent to which children can engage in freely-chosen play
- o How the environment and resources support learning
- o Use of information about children's interests, strengths, prior learning to plan for the next steps in their learning
- o Value placed on children's own creative ideas
- o The effective use of all time for learning

Making Practice Visible…..

- A basic requirement of professional activity
- Generated in the everyday practice of the setting
- By… the staff team, the children, the parents, the management etc.
- E.g. Parent information leaflets, curriculum plans, observations of children, staff reflections, journals, minutes of meetings, learning stories, creative work, photographs…..etc. etc. etc.
- Not especially created for inspection!

Factual Verification

This is issued as a first draft of the report to allow for any factual inaccuracies such as address, names, number of staff and children to be amended

Draft report issued within 3 weeks of visit

Setting has 5 working days to return

Setting name:	
Setting address:	
Setting ID number:	
Type of inspection	
Date of issue of inspection report	
For office use	
Setting name:	

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 number	Inaccuracies
Signature:	Date

Setting Response Form

This is issued with the final version of the report for publication to allow the setting to add any relevant comments for publication with the report

10 working days allowed for return of Setting Response

Processed for publication – within 1 month

Setting name:	
Setting address:	
Setting ID number:	
Type of inspection	
Date of issue of inspection report	
For office use	
Setting name:	
Setting name:	

Please choose option A, or B, or C

OPTION A	The owner / manager accepts the report as the final inspection report and does not wish to respond formally to the report
OPTION B	The owner/ manager accepts the report as the final inspection report and wishes to respond formally to the report. The owner/manager agrees that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the report. The owner's/ manager's response is submitted below.
OPTION C	The owner/manager does not accept the report as the final inspection report and is making a request for a review of the inspection in accordance with the published procedures of the Department of Education and Skills for the review of inspections. The owner/manager will submit/has submitted a written request for a review to the Office of the Chief Inspector.

Part A – response of Owner/Manager
Please comment on the content of the inspection report (approximately 100 – 150 words)

This report is a good representation of the work that we do daily to support the children on our care. We all engaged in the discussion that resulted in the evaluation statements.

Part B – Response of Owner/Manager
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)

Area 4 - We have developed a new information leaflet for parents to support them in the transition from preschool to primary.

Editing Process

- Factual Verification – to allow any inaccuracies regarding the address, reference number, number of staff, children (present on the day) or any other factual errors

- NOT – challenges to the evaluation statements/ratings

- Setting Response – to allow the setting to comment upon the final report and outline what plans they have to improve their practice

- NOT – identifying comments about the inspectors, staff, children or parents or wider context related matters – either positive or negative!

- Published Report – will include the details of the setting response form where appropriate

Publications to date

- 44 Reports published June 2016

http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Early-Years-Education-Reports/

Some emerging themes from Inspection reports

➢ Use of observation to plan for progression in children's learning

➢ Incorporation of children's emerging interests into planning for the next steps in their learning

➢ Promoting play as central to children's learning

➢ Communicating with parents

➢ Provision for children with English as an additional language

➢ Supporting a move away from 'schoolification' models of Early Years provision

➢ Supporting children's sense of identity and belonging

➢ Supporting transitions from pre-school to primary school

A web of trust
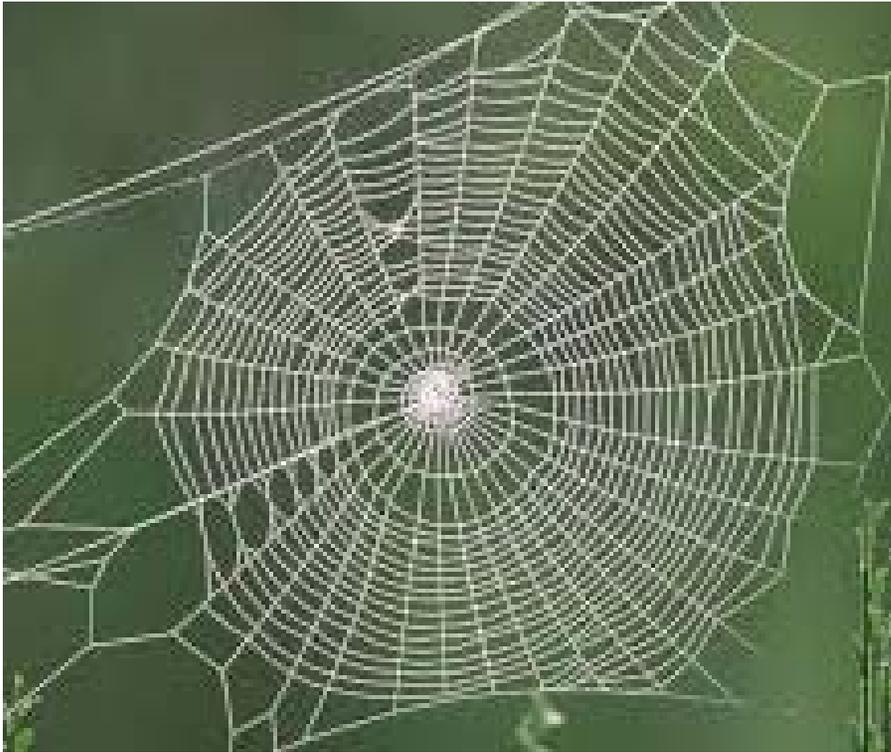
- Challenge for all – to build a 'web of trust' where we are all engaged and challenged, responsive and reflective, with a constant focus on the child's experiences, learning and development

- Strong

- Sensitive

- Responsive

- Connected

Questions and Answers

Míle Buíochas