An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Report

ABC Nursery
09OY0044

Church Street
Tullamore
County Offaly

Date of Inspection: 27th March 2017

CONTEXT OF SETTING

ABC Nursery is a full-day and after-school service located in Tullamore, County Offaly. The service caters for children from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds. On the day of the inspection, three practitioners and eighteen children were present in the pre-school room inspected. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report, the setting chose to accept the report without response.

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 is very good.
- There is a very caring, welcoming and relaxed atmosphere evident. The practitioners engage with the children and their families in conversations during arrival and departure times.
- The practitioners promote warm and trusting relationships with the children through their attentive respectful responses. The key person approach, where each practitioner is assigned to a number of individual children, contributes greatly to ensuring enriching secure relationships.
- Very good provision to guide the children's positive behaviour is well established. The practitioners consistently model respectful language and provide verbal guidance to support the children to manage their own behaviour. A visual display supports the children to understand appropriate behaviour boundaries within the setting.
- Commendable opportunities are provided for the children to make healthy choices and demonstrate a positive attitude to their nutrition and hygiene. Fresh water, fruit and tissues are available for the children to access independently throughout the session.
- The snack time routine which took place outdoors was a highly sociable event. The practitioners and the children organised picnic blankets to sit together and grapes were shared by the children.
- The practitioners effectively nurture the children's sense of identity and belonging. Photographic displays of the children recognise and celebrates their uniqueness. A welcome sign translated by the parents into their home languages is displayed on the door. A small number of activities and materials are available for the children that reflects their home culture, such as, multi-cultural dolls. The practitioners report that they have planned a 'cultural' day to celebrate the various traditions and customs of the children and their families.

Action advised

- In order to further support children's developing sense of identity and belonging, practitioners are advised to expand on how their cultural backgrounds are reflected within the setting. This could include the provision of additional activities and materials in the environment, such as, dress-up clothes and food packages in the home area, books and music reflecting different languages.

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 is good.
- The implementation of play-based curriculum, informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum*, is organised by the practitioners into long-term, medium-term and short-term plans to support the children's learning and development.
- The planning takes good account of the children's cultural backgrounds, strengths, needs and previous learning experiences. At the time of the inspection, the practitioners were responsive to the children's spontaneous interests arising during their play; the documented plans did not reflect these emergent interests.
- A variety of suitable assessment approaches is used to gather information about the children's learning experiences and achievements. Each child has access to their learning stories which includes photographs and written strength-based observations that document their learning

journey within the setting. A checklist is completed three times during the year reflecting the learning progression across three of the four themes of *Aistear*: well-being, identity and belonging and communicating.

- The practitioners recognise and facilitate the children to be active agents in their learning. They move from child to child supporting them to follow and extend their own ideas as partners in play.
- The indoor and outdoor learning environments provide the children with appropriate experiences to develop their creativity, imagination, and problem-solving skills.
- The layout of the indoor environment has recently been redesigned. This resulted in the development of distinct interest areas that provide inviting spaces with accessible play materials for a variety of suitable play types. A small number of materials are not stored together; the table-top materials are currently stored in the construction area, home area and the creative area.
- Play is very clearly the central medium through which the children learn and develop. There is ample time available for the children to engage deeply in their self-directed learning through play.
- The practitioners provide suitable hands-on meaningful opportunities to foster the children's age and stage appropriate literacy and mathematical skills. They model appropriate language and encourage the children to expand their vocabulary and language during the majority of interactions. A variety of high-quality books are available.

Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to note within the checklists children's experiences and achievements across the theme of exploring and thinking contained in *Aistear*.
- In order to further develop an emergent curriculum, it is advised that practitioners incorporate the children's evolving interests into the planning process.
- It is advised that practitioners store the table-top materials together in one distinct interest area.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The children demonstrate enjoyment and interest in their learning.
- The children use their developing social skills to interact with peers. On the day of the inspection, they were observed collaborating to create their own games with rules and negotiating turns when using the wheeled toys and exploring the duck eggs.
- Most children display a keen interest in mark-making as they engage in a range of appropriate activities and materials. For example, using chalk in the outdoors, painting at the easel and making a card.
- The consistent daily routine with clear expectations provide the children with sense of control to confidently direct their learning.
- The active engagement of the children with suitable variety of open-ended experiences contributes to a positive sense of achievement. A group of children were observed experimenting with mixing paints, with one child expressing with delight, 'I know how to make different colours'. The regular access to the learning stories supports the children to reflect, discuss and share aspects of their learning.
- The children regularly use language to express their interests and experiences. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their higher order thinking skills through responding to practitioners' open-ended questions.
- The whole body relaxation and breathing exercises that children engage in are highly effective in supporting the development of their capacity for self-regulation.

Action advised

- The children will benefit from additional opportunities to predict, investigate and problem-solve. The practitioners are advised to increase the frequency and range of open-ended questions that extend and deepen children's thinking. These might include, 'I wonder what we would see if…?', 'What do you think about…?', 'Why did that happen…?'.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- The practitioners demonstrate an ethos of professionalism. There is a positive attitude to engagement in improvement practices that lead to improved outcomes for children.
- The practitioners engage in training events and workshops through the local County Childcare Committee and are part of a community of practice forum. They implement the knowledge gained through reviews of provision in the setting; for example, the format for observations has been amended to ensure the language used by the practitioners is suitable for parents for whom English as a second language.
- The interaction between the practitioners is appropriate and highly respectful; information is communicated clearly and directly. During daily meetings, staff reflect and plan for the children's educational experiences.
- The practitioners use practical strategies to share information about the children's learning and experiences with their parents in a spirit of openness and partnership. This is achieved through daily conversations, the regular sharing of assessment information and displaying photographs in the hallways.
- The parents are made aware of the policies, procedures and curriculum in operation in the setting. Commendably, the practitioners have translated key information into different languages.
- Highly effective settling-in procedures guide the smooth transition of the children into pre-school. Information is gathered from the parents to ensure continuity of experiences and progression in learning for the children.
- Exemplary practice to manage the transition of children from pre-school to primary school, is evident. A positive and collaborative relationship has been established with staff in the local primary school that has resulted in the mutual sharing of information and visits to the pre-school. The practitioners purposefully use the information and resources received during training provided by the local County Childcare Committee to prepare children.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The practitioners engaged professionally in the post-inspection feedback discussion and displayed a commitment to ongoing quality improvement. The capacity of the service to implement the actions advised above is very good.

Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

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	**Good**
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	**Very good**
Quality of management and leadership for learning	**Excellent**

Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

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.

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