An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Report

Breeda's Playschool
09FL0248

94 Foxwood
Swords
County Dublin

Date of Inspection: 16 March 2017

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS
INSPECTORATE

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Breeda's Playschool is a privately-owned and managed service that was set up in 1994. On the day of the inspection, the owner/sole practitioner and ten pre-school children were in attendance. A significant number of children attending the service come from a variety of cultural backgrounds with many children presenting with English as an additional language. The owner/sole practitioner attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. 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 good.
- The practitioner warmly welcomes the parents and the children. She displays a good knowledge and understanding of each child and their family and this is evident in the chats that take place with the parents at arrival and collection times.
- As the children move into the room they call out to their friends demonstrating a positive sense of belonging and enthusiasm. They select their activities and with whom they want to play.
- A daily routine is on the wall and the practitioner decides when the children will move from one activity to another. This is signalled to the children by telling them that it is time to tidy up.
- The children have developed a secure relationship with the practitioner and they were observed chatting to her about family life.
- Praise and encouragement is offered regularly to the children throughout the session. The practitioner uses phrases such as 'well done', 'great tidying' to reassure and motivate the children.
- The practitioner is attentive to children who are new to the setting and offers guidance and support to support them in choosing activities.
- Snack time is valued as a social occasion and the practitioner sits and chats to the children.
- The uniqueness of each child is demonstrated in the children's individual photographs displayed. At the present time, there is no visual representation of the diversity of the children and their families attending the service evident in the room.
- Parents visit the setting at different times throughout the year such as the Christmas party, sports day and end-of-year graduation. Parents and children come together also during the outings to a play centre and the farm.

Actions advised

- The practitioner is advised to develop a daily routine that is visible to the children and that demonstrates the different activities taking place during the day.
- To support the children's engagement in the daily routine and assist them in understanding the sequence of daily events, it is advised that the practitioner use a variety of verbal and visible techniques to signal changes in the routine such as a timer, bell, and music.
- The practitioner is advised to reflect the cultural diversity of the children and their families in the setting. This will support the children's sense of identity and belonging and the development of their understanding of an inclusive society.

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 fair.
- The practitioner undertakes theme-based planning based on the seasons and different festivals. Planning at present is undertaken informally and is not underpinned by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.* The current planning does not reflect individual children's emergent interests.
- The practitioner takes note of the children's involvement in the daily activities. These are shared with the parents at collection time. At the time of inspection, the practitioner did not record information on the children's development and the next steps planned to progress their learning.

- The indoor environment offers a range of play experiences to the children and is well equipped with a good variety of resources. Play is actively encouraged by the practitioner. She offers children adequate time to avail of the play activities in the home corner and in the construction area.
- The children have regular access to a large outdoor area. They are offered the opportunity to develop their gross motor skills through the availability of scooters, bikes, swings and seesaws.
- On the day of the inspection, some positive interactions between the practitioner and the children were observed such as the playful interactions during a game of Buckaroo. Some children struggled to follow directions and appeared distracted during the inspection. There were some missed opportunities to extend the children's language and thinking skills.
- The practitioner promotes the children's pre-literacy and numeracy through activities such as board games, songs and rhymes. The practitioner models mathematical language and incorporates numbers within the different play activities throughout the session such as when building the stacking cups.
- During circle time, the children are encouraged to learn words in Irish and sing their favourite songs. On the day of the inspection, children new to the setting and children learning English as an additional language became distracted as they struggled to take part.
- The children have access to a good selection of books and the practitioner actively engages them and encourages them to shout out what will happen next during the storytelling session.
- Children with additional needs are included in the group. The practitioner has developed a good relationship with parents that supports the mutual sharing of information related to the child. The practitioner has established links with the relevant support agencies. Professionals from these agencies visit the service to provide advice to the practitioner on how best to support the child's development.

Actions advised

- The practitioner is advised to avail of the resources in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to support the planning and development of an emergent curriculum that reflects *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and reflects the individual children's interests.
- It is advised that the practitioner introduce a range of assessment approaches that is used regularly to record information on the children's learning and achievements and include the next steps planned for learning.
- The practitioner is advised to use consistent techniques in her interactions with the children. These could include taking the time to listen to and respond to children and by using more open-ended questions and prompts.
- It is advised that the practitioner further support children with additional needs and use strategies which will support the significant number of children for whom English is an additional language. The use of visual cues, such as pictures of different activities, of the outdoors and cards with 'Then' and 'Now' to signal changes in the routine will help children to feel connected and involved in the day-to-day activities.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children are generally happy and show enjoyment in their self-selected activities. Some children spontaneously start singing the rainbow song as they paint. During the large-group activities such as circle time, some children found it difficult to follow the activity.
- The children generally achieved mastery and success in their activities. On the day of the inspection, some children new to the setting struggled to complete activities and requested help from the practitioner. Children cheer each other on to celebrate when some of them are successful in building with the construction materials.
- The children show confidence and are comfortable chatting to the practitioner about what they have done at home with their families.
- Children are confident in requesting paper and templates to colour in. Children did not have free access to mark-making materials and free process art at the time of the inspection.
- The children bring their art and craft activities home with them every day.

- It is evident the children have developed good relationships with their peers. They are learning to play co-operatively together and to negotiate the taking of turns during activities. This was particularly evident during outdoor play in the garden.
- Children are developing confidence in their self-help skills and are learning to appreciate themselves as competent learners. Some children take care of their environment and tidy-up after their activities. On the day of the inspection, there were missed opportunities for the children to practise their personal and social skills.
- The children are learning about the outdoor environment and have planted flowers and seeds which they bring home.

Actions advised

- The introduction of small-group and paired activities rather than the overuse of large-group activities is advised in order to support the children's sense of success and achievement. The use of focused small-group and paired activities will help to motivate children and give them a sense of their own ability and mastery.
- It is advised that the practitioner offer the children opportunities to develop their self-help and independence skills by offering them the chance to organise their snack, serve each other and put on their coats.
- The practitioner is advised to avoid the necessity for children to ask for paper and mark-making materials by making these easily accessible to them. The reduction in the provision of colouring-in templates and the introduction of free process art will offer the children additional possibilities for expressing their creativity.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The practitioner has been delivering this service for a long time and has a clear vision and focus for her setting.
- The practitioner is committed to ongoing professional development and has recently completed a level six qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.
- The practitioner accesses support and mentoring from Early Childhood Ireland, Fingal County Childcare Committee and TÚSLA.
- The practitioner has built good relationships with the parents and it is clear from the interactions observed that she shows an appreciation and interest in each child and their family. Information on the setting is shared informally with parents at the start of the year. Anecdotal notes on the children's engagement in activities during the session is given to parents at collection time.
- As part of a settling-in initiative, the practitioner encourages parents to bring their children to the setting a day a week in June so children and parents can see what happens during a session. Parents are encouraged to stay with their child during the settling–in period.
- The practitioner talks to the children about their move to primary school. The local primary schools send information to the pre-school and these are shared with parents. Currently, the setting has not developed formal links with the schools.

Actions advised

- The practitioner is advised to avail of the templates in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to support professional self-reflection and to assist in articulating the children's learning programme.
- The development of further opportunities to share the service's curriculum and the children's learning and achievements is advised. This could be done by sharing observations regularly and developing an information leaflet for parents.
- The practitioner is advised to begin the process of building links with the local primary school and to develop procedures to support the children's transition from pre-school to primary school. The use of the document 'Supporting Transitions' in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will assist the practitioner in this regard.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The owner of Breeda's Playschool engaged positively and with enthusiasm to the advice given in the post-inspection feedback meeting and the capacity to implement the actions advised above is good.

Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	**Good**
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	**Fair**
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	**Good**
Quality of management and leadership for learning	**Good**

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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