An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

REPORT

Budding Lilies
09KE0048

Baltracey, Maynooth
Co Kildare

Date of inspection: 29 April 2016

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

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Budding Lilies operates a rural play-based Montessori sessional pre-school service located in Baltracey, Maynooth, Co Kildare. It is in operation for eight years. The service caters for twenty-two children engaged in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme in a one room setting. On the day of inspection there were eighteen children present with the owner/practitioner and one assistant practitioner. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report, and the response submitted on behalf of the setting will be found in the appendix of this report.

AREA 1

QUALITY OF CONTEXT TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The quality of the context to support children's learning and development is excellent.
- The atmosphere is warm, calm and inviting.
- The service successfully operates a key worker system which supports children in their learning.
- A family wall, a family tree, a feelings tree, height chart, display of birthdays and a news notice board supports children developing an appreciation of themselves as individuals and as members of groups. Children are free to choose their play activities and are provided with ample opportunities to be independent in the well-established routines. These include tidying up their own activities after play.
- Children are responsible for taking on and off their shoes and coats and hanging them up.
- Snack/meal time is observed as a social occasion with soft relaxing music playing while the children are eating.
- A buddy system is in place for children to support each other.
- Group rules are displayed for children on the wall and used effectively to support children.
- A 'Culture Wall' and print-rich wall in different languages shows a recognition and affirmation for diversity in social and cultural background within the service.
- The service has made links with the local community, which includes involvement in local events such as an annual Art Fair in the local hall and visitors to the setting from the local community.

AREA 2

QUALITY OF PROCESSES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The quality of the processes to support children's learning and development is excellent.
- The practitioners engage very effectively with *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- A variety of assessment strategies is in place and used effectively to support children in their learning and development. These include varied observations, learning journals, photographs, scrapbooks and regular child interviews including an exit interview.
- Observations on children's learning inform very detailed and individual planning for each child.
- Children are involved in planning at the beginning of the week as a group on what themes they will cover during the week.
- Children use post-it note pads to reflect on their experiences and share these with each other and with the practitioners. At the end of each day children are afforded an opportunity to reflect on their day.
- The daily routine is detailed and flexible linking to both *Aistear* and *Siolta; The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education* comprehensively and to children's rights.
- The weekly routine is child-centred, focusing on the emerging interests of the children, the resources needed, the links to *Aistear* and the best methodology for documenting learning.
- Practitioners ensure that play is central to children's learning through the provision of a large range of rich play activities.
- The balance between child-initiated and adult-directed activities is excellent.

- The practitioners engage in high-quality interactions with the children which consolidate and extend learning.
- Children are viewed as capable and competent active learners. They actively engage in a suitable range of learning activities. They regularly engage in health and safety audits of their environment and these are documented visually for them.
- Specific attention is afforded to children at the service with additional needs with comprehensive strategies in place to support them.
- The indoor and outdoor area is very well considered and has a wide variety of interest areas and high-quality resources that support children's play. Extensive labelling of areas is evident throughout.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the context to support children's learning experiences is excellent.
- Children engage with their environment positively and the careful use of well-thought out materials and resources support children's feelings of success and enjoyment.
- Children persevere and concentrate as individuals and in pairs to support and motivate each other.
- Children discuss their achievements and success with the practitioners and their peers with ease.
- Children are comfortable discussing and using mathematical language and engage comprehensively about their learning experiences in group discussions.
- Children are supported in discussing their feelings, emotions and opinions through specific activities such as the creation of a TV folder where they communicate what they like to watch on television and through the use of emotion cards where they discuss their feelings.
- The service has engaged in a Healthy Ireland Project and parent meetings about this have been held.
- A comprehensive project on 1916 – 2016 has gained children in the service an award for their art work. An event is planned to share this success with all parents in the near future.
- Opportunities for mark-making are very well accommodated with a range of resources and opportunities.These are displayed creatively around the room.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- Team meetings take place regularly. The meetings facilitate the ongoing improvement in the quality of provision. Minutes are kept.
- Staff engage in regular self-review which is documented and used to inform provision for children's learning opportunities. A training and reflection day is held yearly for staff.
- Management and staff have availed of a number of training courses and are committed to ongoing professional development through engagement with their County Childcare Committee.
- Parents are consulted both formally and informally about their child's learning on a regular basis. This includes a regular newsletter and comprehensive handbook for parents.
- Children and parents are consulted at review time and parent and child evaluations are carried out throughout the year.
- Detailed information is gathered from parents and families prior to children starting at the service.
- A transitions policy is in place and is shared with parents and with the children to best support children's transitions from preschool to primary school.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

There is excellent capacity and interest on the part of the manager in relation to implementing the actions advised in this report.

Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	**Excellent**
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	**Excellent**
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	**Excellent**
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.

APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

Budding Lilies found the report be complimentary. It has highlighted the different aspects of our daily processes which on occasion we had possibly taken for granted. We are proud to have received the inspection findings.

I found the verbal feedback and this report to assist in boosting morale in staff where it confirms we are providing a suitable service for the children who attend us. It also inspires us to keep up the high standards and improve on all aspects of the service we are providing.

In general Budding Lilies has found that the background work, time, research, training and efforts of all staff involved has been noticed, observed and acknowledged.

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to address the actions advised in the inspection report

Budding Lilies is delighted to take on board all recommendations and advice given to us by the Department of Education and Skills.

We have found it to be constructive and helpful in maintaining quality standards in the school. Through actively engaging in their recommendations we hope to keep learning and growing in a professional manner raising the general standards of the school.

In conclusion, I found that the children will benefit from this process through quality first-hand experiences and we as early year professionals will benefit through evolving and developing to our potential.

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