An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Report

Corbally Montessori
13CC0461

Jimmy's Cross
Corbally
Waterfall
County Cork

Date of Inspection: 29 March 2017

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Corbally Montessori is a privately owned setting located in a rural area. On the day of the inspection, sixteen pre-school children were present together with three practitioners and two students. All three practitioners 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 very good.
- A very busy, happy, playful atmosphere prevails, where children evidently are active agents in choosing and organising their learning and development activities.
- Respect for and recognition of the uniqueness of each child is very apparent and there are sensitive, warm and affirming interactions between the practitioners and the children.
- Transitions within the setting are announced ahead of time and are utilised very well as positive learning experiences.
- The setting has established good connections with the local community and a broad variety of opportunities is provided throughout the year to bring families together in the setting. There is an open invitation to parents and family members to share their expertise with the children, which has resulted in the visit of musicians, the Garda, a dentist and a dental nurse.
- Meal time is seen as a social occasion. Practitioners sit, eat and communicate with the children in a relaxed, family-like atmosphere. This practice promotes well-being and a healthy lifestyle. At present children are told where to sit, which caused some upset on the morning of the inspection.
- The daily routine displayed on the wall was not followed on the day of the inspection. This plan needs to be updated to accurately reflect the daily routine in practice. All the practitioner-initiated/led activity times and the child-initiated/led activity times are organised together in a block. On the plan, lunch time is organised towards the end of the morning before going home.

Actions advised

- It is advised that children be afforded more free choice of friends to sit with during meal time. Behaviour issues need to be addressed and talked about and, if necessary, a practitioner could sit next to the children who need extra guidance and support during this time. It is essential that good, clear habits concerning meal times are established from the beginning of the year.
- A change of the daily routine is advised. A better balance between child-initiated/led activities and adult-initiated/led activities needs to be achieved. For example, there could be indoor free play followed by morning circle-time. Then lunch could be followed by outdoor free play and story time. Arts and craft activities and table-top play could be offered as free choices during play times.

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 excellent.
- A broad-based curriculum, informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is documented and utilised to support children's learning and development.
- A variety of assessment approaches is used to gather information about children's learning experiences and achievements. Their interests, dispositions, knowledge, strengths and values are recognised, documented and fostered. It is not clear how these observations are used to inform the daily curriculum plan. The use of these assessments needs to be made more visible in the curriculum plan.
- Parents and families are proactively consulted and informed about their child's learning and development. The setting shares information with them in a spirit of openness, mutual respect and transparency.
- Very high quality interactions with the children are facilitated and the practitioners use appropriate interaction strategies very effectively to co-construct knowledge with the children.

- The indoor and outdoor environment and resources are safe and inviting. They are purposefully structured to develop children's curiosity, creativity, imagination, desire to explore and their overall healthy physical development. The setting has organised full raingear and appropriate footwear for both children and practitioners, so that they can make use of their vast, exemplary outdoor play area on a daily basis, regardless of the weather.
- Play is recognised and utilised as the central medium through which children learn and develop.
- There is outstanding use of circle time, promoting language development and a love for language through the use of songs, finger games, rhymes and whole-body movement games. Children explore sound, pattern, rhythm and repetition in language and express it through movement.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are fostered through the use of song, rhyme, dance, small-group story exploration and mark-making. Children have access to high quality books.

Actions advised

- It is advised that catering for the children's emerging interests be included in the weekly and daily curriculum plan.
- The daily use of story-time should be introduced. Interactively exploring one high quality story over a period of time is a good way of developing early literacy skills. Children should also become conscious of using mathematical concepts in everyday life situations to a greater extent.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is excellent.
- The children are very confident, motivated and competent; they are highly engaged in their learning activities. They display positive learning dispositions such as initiative, ideas, creativity, curiosity, resilience, resourcefulness and persistence.
- Through daily exploration and engagement with the vast, challenging, natural, risk-rich outdoor environment and its plants and animals, the children become aware of the ever changing nature of this environment. This further provides a myriad of opportunities to develop the children's physical skills and coordination. These skills include building up core strength, refining muscle tone, improving gross and fine-motor skills, and developing their sense of balance and spatial awareness. All of these physical attributes are the essential basis for school readiness. Through these rich learning activities, the children experience success and develop an awareness of their changing abilities. They readily discuss and share these experiences during their play as well as during lunch time, using their capacity to remember, reflect and judge.
- The children are very capable and well spoken. They show an amazing capacity for self-regulation and conflict resolution. Using their developing personal and social skills, they negotiate, discuss, take-turns, co-operate, take responsibility, make and refuse requests, and ask questions. They try out things for themselves, imagine and create and re-create roles to clarify their thinking, ideas and feelings. The children are developing an appreciation and an understanding of different languages and how they can be used with different people and for different occasions. This is developed through the use of English, Irish and Spanish, in songs, rhymes, games and for everyday life situations.
- The children utilise the many opportunities provided to express their feelings, thoughts, ideas and creativity. These opportunities include role-play, mark-making, arts and craft, whole-body movement games, and exploring sound, pattern, rhythm and repetition in songs, rhymes and finger games.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- Practitioners keep a diary, where everyday observations and events are noted. This builds the base for the informal daily chats at the end of the morning session. More formal, regular whole-team meetings are carried out and documented, shared and acted upon to improve the children's learning experiences and achievements.

- The leader provides a good role model for the staff and together they promote high standards and follow a clear vision and direction for the work of the setting. There is apparent clarity around the roles and responsibilities of each staff member and everybody takes leadership at different stages throughout the morning in promoting quality learning.
- Staff and management are committed to ongoing professional development, and are currently completing a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 6 course: Leadership for inclusion in the early-years programme. They also complete different sports training courses suitable for the early years.
- A broad variety of clear two-way channels of communication between the setting and the families is established and utilised on a daily basis.
- Transitions into and from the setting are managed sensitively. These transitions are highly effective in providing continuity of experiences and progression in the children's learning.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the service to implement the actions advised above is excellent.

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	**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.

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