An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Follow-Through Inspection
Final Report

Setting name	Mothercare Crèche and Montessori
Setting address	Cosmona Loughrea County Galway H62CX40
TUSLA registration number	TU2016GY012
DCEDIY number	16GY0433
Date of inspection	16-03-2023
Date of issue of report	30-05-2023

What is a Follow-Through Inspection?

Follow-through inspections evaluate the progress a setting has made on implementing actions advised in an earlier inspection rather than the overall quality of education provision in a setting. Inspectors also advise the setting on strategies and actions to enable them to fully address actions advised in the earlier inspection report.

How to read this report

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated the progress the setting has made in implementing actions advised in an earlier inspection under the following headings:

1. Progress achieved to date
2. Summary of findings
3. Actions advised

Inspectors describe the quality of the progress made in each of these areas using the Inspectorate's follow-through quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The follow-through quality continuum explains the terms used by inspectors when evaluating the setting's progress in implementing actions advised.

The change in the title used to refer to staff in ELC settings, from 'practitioner' to 'educator', reflects the change in title outlined in 'Nurturing Skills: The Workforce Plan for Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare, 2022-2028'.

ORIGINAL INSPECTION DETAILS	FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION DETAILS
Type: EYEI	**Date of Inspection: 16-03-2023**
Date of inspection: 29-11-2019	
Report published? Yes	

Follow-through inspection activities

The following activities took place in the course of the follow-through inspection

- Pre-inspection meeting with the setting owner/manager
- Review of setting documentation and records of children's learning and development
- Review of the education resources and facilities
- Observations of interactions during a number of sessions
- Interaction with the children
- Feedback meeting with the setting owner/manager and early years educators

Context of Setting

Mothercare Crèche and Montessori is a privately owned full day care setting located in Loughrea, County Galway. The setting provides one morning session to children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. There were nineteen children, the manager and two early years educators present during this follow-through inspection. 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 can be found in the appendix of this report.

Action/s advised in Area 1 in the original inspection report	Progress achieved to date on implementation of actions advised
The practitioners are advised to create an extensive free play period for the children and to generate an interactive display of the daily routine which will clarify the new routine for the children. This will support children to have choice and be active during the daily routine and will help them to be prepared for the next activities.	**Partial progress** The daily routine was now displayed in written format. An accurate pictorial schedule of the activities of the day would have helped the children to understand the sequence of the activities. Provision of child-led play had improved and the children enjoyed short periods of child-led play, both indoors and outdoors, during the ECCE session.
The practitioners are advised to ensure that the transitions between activities are short and provide opportunities for learning to take place. Children could be encouraged to read stories, sing, and converse about various topics during transition periods.	**Very good progress** All of the transitions, where the children moved from activity to activity, throughout the morning progressed smoothly and were short in duration. The children sang an appropriate song during one transition and naturally engaged in child-led play during another. There were minimal waiting times during transition periods, with flexibility and additional time afforded to the children to finish their lunch.
Building on the existing group and individual displays, the practitioners are advised to increase the children's awareness of their local community. It	**Very good progress** A large visual display had been created showcasing photographs of many local landmarks to the children. A learning theme noted in the curriculum plans was 'People who work in our community'

would be beneficial to invite more local people to visit the setting and to display photographs of the key local features, buildings and amenities.	where the educators supported the children's understanding of particular community roles. The setting was also visited by the local Garda and paramedic. There were many natural discussions throughout the morning about the upcoming local St. Patrick's Day Parade. The educators had displayed images of international flags in the learning environment which supported the children's understanding of diversity in the community.
Action/s advised in Area 2 in the original inspection report	**Progress achieved to date on implementation of actions advised:**
It is advised that the practitioners review their planning processes to ensure that they identify and record the children's emergent interests and how these interests will be used to inform activities.	**Partial progress** The educators had commenced a system for completing very detailed long, medium and short-term curriculum plans. The most recent short-term plan included the children's emergent interest in 'insects'. The plan identified how this interest might be further developed. The majority of the learning themes outlined in these plans were based around the seasons, seasonal celebrations, developmental goals and social skills.
The practitioners are advised to develop more formal processes to record the children's learning and development. Observations of the children need to be undertaken periodically. The practitioners are encouraged to use the Aistear Learner Record to support them in developing these practices.	**Very good progress** The educators completed bi-monthly observations to support and progress each child's learning and development using the *Aistear* learner record. These observations contained photographs and narrative descriptions of the children's play experiences. Learner records were fully developed for each child during the periods September / October, November / December and January / February.
It is advised that the practitioners extend their interactions with the children, to support their language development and to enhance their understanding of early numeracy and literacy concepts. To this end, the practitioners need to use more open-ended questions, a broad and rich vocabulary, and they need to extend their commentary during play experiences	**No progress** No evidence relating to this action advised was observed during the Follow-Through Inspection.
The practitioners are advised to review the indoor environment. There is a need to generate more defined interest areas, and to provide natural equipment and loose parts which can be used in all areas of the room for exploration and discovery. The 'Learning Environment' pillar of the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* will support this review.	**Good progress** The following defined learning areas have been created; a creative and mark-making shelf, a construction area, a comfortable reading area with cushions and a home corner with metal pots and pans and wooden items. Other real play resources such as beads, magnets and piping were also available for the children.
Action/s advised in Area 3 in the original inspection report	**Progress achieved to date on implementation of actions advised:**
It is advised that the practitioners review and update their behaviour policy. There is	**Good progress**

a need to offer positive support and guidance to children so that they can regulate their own behaviour and responses and respond appropriately when minor conflicts arise.	The behaviour management policy that has been developed was strengths-based in nature. It focused on positive reinforcements and praise, reasonable expectations for children's behaviour, ensuring consistency in approach, modelling behaviour and communication with parents. There were meaningful and positive mantras, rules and relevant photographs displayed in the learning environment. These included; *'We have lots of fun playing nicely', 'When we jump or push, someone can get hurt and that will be sore'* and *'I love to play with my brother at home'.* The educators also supported the children through warm, positive affirmations throughout the morning.
The practitioners are advised to create an open and accessible mark-making area with various art materials which the children can access independently and spontaneously throughout the session. The practitioners are encouraged to celebrate the unique and individual art created by the children. This will increase children's confidence in their ability to mark-make.	**Good progress** The educators had developed an accessible shelf which contained creative materials including a chalk-board and chalk, pencils, crayons and a large roll of paper. Some other creative items available to the children included playdough and a range of arts and crafts materials. There were some examples of process art and the children's commentary on their artistic endeavours in their individual scrapbooks.
In place of the emphasis placed on adult-led activities, the practitioners are advised to offer the children more time to explore naturally and independently in their environment. This will encourage them to be curious and creative.	**Partial progress** The children were afforded some time in the indoor and outdoor learning environments to explore independently.
Action/s advised in Area 4 in the original inspection report	**Progress achieved to date on implementation of actions advised:**
To support further development in practices, the owner is advised to plan a weekly period for planning, reviewing and reflecting on practices. To support self-reflection and a sustained focus on improvement, the practitioners are advised to engage systematically with the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide.*	**Partial progress** The educators co-operatively planned for the weekly curriculum. The educators engaged with 'the enhancing language' tip-sheet from the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* to support one child's language development. The educators also completed the learner record template from the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* to document and progress each children's learning and development.
The practitioners are advised to extend communication with parents. This could be achieved through a parent handbook. In addition, steps need to be taken to share additional information on children's learning and development with parents and parents could be encouraged to visit the setting regularly to support curriculum implementation.	**Very good progress** A parents' handbook was developed which provided information on current staff, settling-in procedures, the behaviour management policy and the anti-bullying policy. The educators also communicated effectively with the parents through a social media application. The manager and the educators invited the parents into the setting for seasonal celebrations and the educators shared the observations of the children's learning with the parents on a termly basis.
Summary of findings	
Good efforts were made by the manager and early years educator to implement the actions advised in the original inspection report. Of the twelve actions advised, very good progress was made in four areas, good progress was	

made in relation to three, partial progress was made in relation to four with no evidence of progress in one area. Overall, improvements were noted in the support for transitions, building the awareness of the local community, the documentation of the children's learning and development, reviewing the learning environment and resources, revising the behaviour management policy and developing communication practices with parents. The manager and early years educator were encouraged to focus their efforts on the actions advised that had been partially addressed or where progress had not yet been made.

Actions advised

- The educators are advised to create and display an accurate pictorial schedule of the activities of the day to help guide the children during the pre-school session. This daily routine should maximise the opportunity for the children to engage in child-led play.
- The educators are advised to ensure that the children's emerging interests are a consistent formal feature of their short-term curriculum plans.
- Building on the warm and positive interactions currently in place, the manager and the educators are advised to regularly and consistently incorporate higher-order interactions into their practice such as open-ended commentary and questioning to promote sustained-shared thinking and to further enhance children's learning.
- To support the children's natural inclination to express themselves, explore and experiment, the manager and the educators are advised to ensure that a range of creative and sensorial materials is consistently available for the children to explore indoors. This includes free provision of sand, water and paint and a greater focus on supporting the children to engage self-initiated process art.
- The manager is advised to review the behaviour management policy to ensure that opportunities to support the children to develop independent problem-solving skills are actively promoted.
- The manager and the educators are advised to consistently evaluate, review and reflect on practice and to create and progress action plans for improvement. Utilising the resources from the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* will be very supportive in the development of this action.
- The manager and the educators are advised to regularly update the parents on their children's learning and development. Sharing the completed learner records and samples of the children's art-work in a consistent and timely manner will be very beneficial in this regard.

Language used in Early Years Education Follow-through inspection reports

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the setting using the language which is shown below.

Level	Description
Very good progress	Very good progress indicates that appropriate action has been taken to address the action advised, and that the action has fully achieved or will achieve the required outcome.
Good progress	Good progress indicates that appropriate action has been taken to address the action advised, and that substantial improvement has occurred, although further progress is necessary.
Partial progress	Partial progress indicates that some appropriate action has been taken to address the action advised, and some improvement has occurred, but considerable further progress is necessary.
No progress	No progress indicates that no action has been taken, and that the original action advised remains to be addressed.

The following resources can be used by ELC settings in their quality improvement:

Aistear Siolta Practice Guide

Department of Education Insights – Quality in Early Years Education webinars

APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

We have developed and enhanced our open- ended question and extended their commentary during play. We have brought our water and sand play and has now become part of our daily routine. Our staff will continue with their CDP and will upskill in all areas. For our outside area, we have now introduced open-ended materials