An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Report

Naíonra Éanna
09MH0107

c/o Gaelscoil Éanna
Trim Road
Navan
County Meath

Date of Inspection: 15th June 2017

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

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Naíonra Éanna was established in 2003 under private management. The pre-school is located on the site of Gaelscoil Éanna in Navan. A pre-school programme is provided through the medium of Irish for young children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). Programme A morning and an afternoon session are provided. The inspection was conducted during a morning session. Seventeen children were present with the owner/manager and two practitioners on the day of the inspection. Most of the children attending this pre-school transfer to the Irish-medium school for their primary education but English is the main language spoken by them at home. This inspection was undertaken at the end of the pre-school year when the practitioners and the children were preparing activities associated with the end of year and holidays. 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 excellent.
- The practitioners have fostered a respectful, positive relationship with children and their parents. Time is given to having dialogue with the parents and to sharing information regarding the children's well-being and progress.
- A positive environment and a calm atmosphere are apparent in the setting and children are praised on a regular basis. Practitioners use encouraging statements and constructive feedback to foster a sense of identity and self-confidence in the children. They demonstrate a strong understanding of the children's dispositions and needs and they provide appropriate guidance to enable them participate in all play activities. Children treat each other with respect and they display an understanding of good behaviour.
- The daily practices that support the children's visual, social and emotional development are well embedded. Children are actively engaged in selecting their learning activities. There is a good balance between practitioner-directed activities and child-directed activities. All of the practitioners use Irish to to implement their established practices and they foster a positive attitude towards Irish in this setting.
- Children's independence is being developed effectively. The children move with ease from one activity to another. The children are appropriately supported, where necessary, in managing their personal care and in making decisions and choices. The children and the practitioners make effective use of the various displays at times of transition, when such is required. Poems and songs are used when moving to and preparing for certain activities.
- The practitioners direct the children's attention to healthy and unhealthy foods and to healthy lifestyles.
- The practitioners recognise diversity and they create an inclusive learning environment in this early-years setting. Various resources associated with themes from the different countries are displayed. Photographs are displayed and a selection of words from different languages that children speak are also displayed.
- Links are created with the local community through interactions with the parents and members of the community.

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 very good.
- It is evident that the practitioners have undertaken considerable work to promote A*istear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Appropriate attention is given to the children's areas of interest and this information is used to extend and consolidate the children's learning. The practitioners have comprehensive long-term, medium-term and short-term planning available to inform the teaching and learning. They provide parents with a record (in Irish and in English) of the plan for children's learning

- Children's development across a wide range of areas of learning is regularly recorded. These records indicate that the child is viewed as a competent, confident learner. Children have regular opportunities for reflection on their learning through viewing their book, 'Mé Féin'.
- Play is the primary means by which the children learn in this setting. A range of appropriate, attractive resources is easily accessible to children, that includes provision for creative play, dramatic play, constructive play and physical play. The external and internal environments are very well laid out to stimulate and support the children's learning through play. Many opportunities are provided for the children to participate in a variety of valuable experiences.
- The interactions between the practitioners and the children are playful and they succeed in stimulating the children's interest and attention. These interactions indicate that the child is recognised as an active agent in his/her learning. The practitioners provide the children with encouragement and with opportunities to use and develop their creative and imaginative skills. They provide 'Junk Art' and they write the children's stories on their creative pictures.
- Practitioners regularly use rhymes and songs to improve the children's understanding of Irish. On the day of the inspection, the children used Irish during the structured activities such as circle time, but they did not use a lot of Irish outside of the structured activites. Although practitioners' fluency in Irish greatly assists the children's language acquisition in authentic contexts, it would be worth extending the range of vocabulary and language used during the interactions with children. For example, they used various phrases with the children when they were outside playing and running from one corner to another but the children continued to speak in English for most of the time. It was reported that the practitioners organise small-group activities to give the children opportunities to hear and use Irish during these periods but these did not occur on the day of the visit.
- The practitioners focus the children's attention on mathematical concepts in meaningful natural contexts, for example, when they are counting blocks or talking about various colours.
- Children are provided with commendable opportunities to engage in mark-making in various places in this setting, both outside in the playground and in the room.
- Children's learning and development are fostered in cooperation with parents. Practitioners provide for the children's differing needs effectively and with understanding.

Action advised

- To extend the good work that occurs to promote Irish in this setting, it is advised that the practitioners use additional strategies to encourage the children to use as much Irish as they have during their interactions with practitioners or independently with each other. It is advised that the programme *Borradh* be used to support the children's language development.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- Children display positive learning dispositions, for example, resourcefulness and resilience while playing and participating in the various activities. Curiosity, imagination and a natural creativity are apparent amongst children. They display their creativity through pictures, drama and play. A positive self-confidence is evident amongst the children of this pre-school.
- Children indicate that they greatly enjoy free play and, in particular, playing together outside. The children demonstrate confidence in their use of gross motor and fine motor skills.
- Children are developing personal and social skills. They work cooperatively to solve problems.
- Children displayed a good understanding of Irish and they participated fully in songs and in the activities undertaken during circle time. They displayed an understanding of sound and pattern when reciting songs and poems. Most of the children used single words in Irish from time to time to identify a colour or to name a food. They rarely used Irish to discuss their feelings, their thoughts or their personal experiences. Most children were not heard asking questions in Irish. A few children managed to count things out loud in Irish. The children display an interest in storytelling and the opportunities they have to engage in mark-making in different contexts is a great strength.

- It is clear that children have plenty of opportunities to explore the environment externally and internally. They use their physical skills to handle objects and materials; for example, clay, sand and water. They thoroughly enjoyed looking at insects in the garden.
- The children display a great interest in the ' Flat Stanley' project and in receiving return letters from different parts of the world.

Action advised

- It is advised that the practitioners encourage the children to regularly use as much Irish as they have during the session. It would enhance the richness of the children's language and the development of their language skills if they were frequently speaking in Irish during the session.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- The owner/ manager and the practitioners on the staff regularly reflect and review their practices in order to improve the children's learning experiences. They have been successful in adopting and using *Aistear* and they are constantly trying to improve the learning experience for children. They have undertaken excellent work in the external environment to strengthen and increase the children's learning. The communicative project, 'Flat Stanley' indicates that the owner/manager is continuously trying new methods to further improve the children's learning.
- A professional, cooperative and collegial environment is evident. The practitioners have been working together for a long time in the pre-school. Each practitioner adopts a leadership role during the session and they work together as an effective team. They attend training courses to improve their own professional development.
- Parents and families are informed about the policies and practices that are implemented in the *naíonra*. There are formal and informal opportunities to share information with parents and families and with other professionals for the benefit of children's progress. Information is gathered from parents and families on children's previous experiences and this is used to supportcontinuity in experiences, and progress in learning for children.
- Links have been created between the pre-school and the Irish-medium school in which it is situated to support the transfer to primary school. The pre-school staff is keen to further strengthen these links.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the practitioners in this pre-school to implement the actions advised in this report is excellent.

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	**Very 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.

Published December 2017