Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

REPORT

Cheeky Monkey Montessori School
and Afterschool Club

09LH0022

Ardee Parish Centre
Hale Street
Ardee
County Louth

Date of inspection: 03 May 2016
CONTEXT OF SETTING

Cheeky Monkey Montessori School and Afterschool Club, established in 2007, is a private service located in Ardee Parish Centre in Co Louth. It provides two morning and one afternoon pre-school sessions for children participating in the Early Childhood and Care Education (ECCE) Programme. The inspection was conducted in one of the morning sessions where fifteen children and three practitioners were present. 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 the children’s learning and development is very good.
• A warm, caring atmosphere is evident in the setting. Children are allocated into key groups informed by their needs and levels of development.
• Practitioners have a positive rapport with parents. Practitioners greet and welcome parents at arrival and home times and information is shared in an informal and professional way.
• The children are active in the session, making many choices about their play activities and partners.
• The setting has established very strong links with the local community. Many visiting speakers, such as postman, Garda, school principals, are invited into the setting to share information with the children.
• There is a strong focus on implementing health promotion programmes in the setting.
• Diversity in social and cultural background is recognised and represented in the learning environment. Some practitioners have completed the Media Initiative Respecting Difference programme and the materials are effectively integrated in the environment.

Actions advised
• To build on good practice, practitioners are advised to place greater emphasis on displays of the locality, such as maps of local area and photographs of familiar places and of visiting speakers.
• Practitioners are advised to refine the use of the key person system to develop the daily routine and increase opportunities for children’s learning.

AREA 2
QUALITY OF PROCESSES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

• The quality of the processes to support the children learning and development is good.
• The service is beginning to use Aistear: the Early Child Curriculum Framework effectively to inform the curriculum.
• Planning, short-term, medium-term and long-term, is approached consistently by practitioners.
• Good initial work is being undertaken in observing and assessing the children’s learning and development.
• The indoor learning environment is well maintained and resourced. There is a variety of Montessori and open-ended play equipment available.
• It was observed that when children choose Montessori activities, they were assisted by practitioners effectively in keeping with Montessori principles.
• There is a consistent daily routine for children. It was noted that children were engaged in full-group activities for a large amount of time which limits the opportunities for developing their speaking and listening skills.
**Actions advised**

- Practitioners are advised to review the daily routine with a focus on optimising the use of the resources available in the room, including sensory play materials.
- To support the development of children’s listening and speaking skills, it is advised that the amount of time spent in full group activities be decreased and opportunities for pair, small group and key group activities be increased.
- It is advised that the information gathered on children’s learning and development be used to inform curriculum planning to support, scaffold and extend learning and development.

**AREA 3**

**QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

- The quality of the children’s learning and development is good.
- Children’s process art work is displayed in the room with notes attached capturing children’s own descriptions of their creative work.
- Activities are planned around children’s interests, such as train activities and hairdressing.
- Good development of children’s numeracy skills is evident.
- There is some evidence of emergent writing which can be further developed and supported.
- The children demonstrate a good capacity to make healthy choices and to engage in physical activity.

**Actions advised**

- Children’s learning experiences would benefit from additional opportunities to discuss, review and reflect on their learning and achievements during the course of the day.
- Practitioners are advised to provide opportunities for children to express themselves in many ways, through art, dance and movement, drama and role play, emergent writing and conversation.
- To build on the good practices that are already in place, practitioners are advised to increase opportunities for language and literacy development through planned use of books and reading materials, songs and rhymes and mark-making.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of the management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The team display a strong commitment to ongoing professional development. The owner/manager is currently completing a bachelor degree and staff attend training when available.
- Team meetings are held termly and are documented. Staff members have opportunities to contribute and the team uses these meetings to identify priority areas for development.
- Staff in the service makes great efforts to connect with parents through newsletters, invitations to come into the session and engage with children, staging of a Christmas play with refreshments afterwards and a variety of information nights, for example, promoting dental health
- Information and observations in relation to children’s learning and achievements are shared with parents and parents sign off on them.

**Action advised**

- To allow families to explore and celebrate their child’s learning and achievements in the setting, it is advised that the children’s ‘Aistear’ learner journals are sent home regularly and that a section for parents’ thoughts and feedback is added.
CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The owner and practitioners engaged in a very professional manner during the post-inspection feedback meeting and discussion around the key findings presented above. They demonstrate strong capacity and commitment to implement the actions advised.
# Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of context to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.</td>
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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The content of the inspection report based on the inspection carried out in Cheeky Monkey is accurate and it reports on the quality of the context and processes of children’s learning and development. It also reports on the quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements and on the quality of management and leadership for learning. As a setting, we welcome any support and guidance directed our way too. Staff were able to discuss the findings which form the content of this report on the day of the inspection with the inspectors and this was of great benefit.

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