Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Report

Templebreedy Pre-school
09CC0084

Templebreedy National School
Crosshaven
County Cork

Date of Inspection: 7 March 2017
CONTEXT OF SETTING

Templebreedy Pre-school is a sessional, community setting attached to Templebreedy National School on the outskirts of Crosshaven. Three practitioners work in the service. On the day of the inspection sixteen children were present. 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, and the response submitted on behalf of the setting can 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 very caring ethos and a warm, relaxed, peaceful, unrushed atmosphere are evident, where the children arrive happy and get straight into chats and busy play activities.
- The sensitive, calm practitioners show a positive regard for the children and their families. The relationships are responsive, respectful and reciprocal.
- The nice representations of children’s work, their feelings, their interests and their activities, together with a lovely child-designed family wall, provide opportunities for the children to develop an appreciation of themselves as individuals and as members of groups. It further shows how much diversity is recognised, valued and affirmed within an inclusive learning environment.
- Snack time is very well utilised as a social occasion and an opportunity to promote well-being and a healthy lifestyle. The children and adults sit, eat and communicate together in a very relaxed, peaceful atmosphere.
- The children are very well supported to manage their own hygiene and personal care needs. They have daily opportunities to practise important life skills and to embed good habits such as washing the tables, sweeping, sorting and pairing, organising and tidying the room. Practitioners and children cooperate very effectively during these transition times.
- Snack time is very well utilised as a social occasion and an opportunity to promote well-being and a healthy lifestyle. The children and adults sit, eat and communicate together in a very relaxed, peaceful atmosphere.
- The daily routine needs to be revised in order to ensure that it promotes children’s physical, social and emotional development and their learning.
- Practitioners are role models worthy of imitation; they provide useful guidance for problem solving and conflict resolution.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to revise the daily routine in order to ensure a better balance between adult-initiated/led and child-initiated/led activities as well as between physically active times and less active concentration times.
- Practitioners are advised to refrain from using general statements such as, ‘Good boy’ and ‘Good girl’, and to instead focus on the actual achievements of children, for example, trying or completing something or a positive social interaction.

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 good.
- As evident in the displays of several activities, the children’s emerging interests and dispositions are followed and extended.
- A variety of assessment approaches is used to gather information about children’s learning experiences and achievements. A learning folder that mainly contains photographs and template art pictures is created and regularly shared with the families.
Children are very evidently viewed as competent and confident learners. They are encouraged to be active agents in their learning. The practitioners know the children very well and high quality interactions with the children are facilitated.

The indoor environment offers a broad variety of play types and is structured to ensure that the children learn in a diversity of contexts throughout the day. The children manipulate and recreate the play environment to follow their own play exploration by moving some furniture, and by using blankets and other materials to build dens and cosy areas.

Emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills are fostered in variety of ways throughout the day; these skills are linked to everyday life experiences. A range of mark-making opportunities is also provided.

Practitioners recognise and accommodate diversity in the style, pace and focus of children’s learning and development. This was particularly evident in the skilful inclusion of children with additional needs into paired and small-group play activities.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to engage with the ‘Planning and assessment’ pillar of the online *Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide* in order to deepen their understanding of the development of an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum and its implementation. Information arising from the assessment of children’s interests, ideas, dispositions, strengths and values needs to inform the planning of the curriculum.
- All materials and resources (including table-top activities and a well-resourced junk-art table) should be freely available for the children to access throughout the free-play periods.
- The play value of the outdoor environment needs to be enhanced by adding loose, versatile, open-ended materials and resources. Practitioners are advised to organise rainproof clothing for themselves and the children; this will enable proper daily outdoor play in every weather. The ‘Environment’ pillar of the *Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide* provides valuable information in this regard.
- Practitioners are advised to refrain from using didactic teaching methods such as colouring-in exercises, stencil art and worksheet-based matching tasks. The focus needs to be on the development of gross motor skills before fine motor skills. In this regard, physical activity is important for the development of the children’s core muscle strength, a healthy sense of balance and their spatial awareness. Practitioners are also advised to support the children in refining the muscle tone in their arms, hands and fingers through sand and water play, modelling play dough, painting, and cutting with scissors. Literacy and numeracy skills can also be further developed through the daily use of songs and rhymes in whole-body movement games and finger games and through interactive, in-depth exploration of a high quality story.

**AREA 3**

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

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The children present as very competent, confident, self-motivated and engaged. They display positive learning dispositions such as resilience, persistence, initiative and resourcefulness.
- The children are very skilled in playing together in pairs and small groups and are developing their personal and social skills such as self-regulation, problem solving, turn-taking, negotiating and cooperating. They seem to have an understanding of and a positive regard for the identity, rights and views of others.
- Particularly during free play periods, the children use language very skilfully to give and receive information, make requests, negotiate, imagine and recreate roles to clarify their thinking, feeling and ideas.

**Actions advised**

- It is advised that, during the practitioner-led activity times, the children be given more scope to creatively express their feelings, thoughts and ideas.
- Further development of the outdoor area is advised in order to provide the children with additional opportunities to make sense of the world around them through interacting with the natural environment, its features, materials, animals and plants. The children would benefit from greater...
exploration of and experimentation in the environment, using their developing physical skills to manipulate objects and materials.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- Management and staff regularly reflect on and review their practice, policies and procedures in weekly team meetings as well as at monthly steering group meetings. The outcomes of these meetings are documented, shared and acted upon to improve the children’s learning experiences and achievements.
- An ethos of professionalism, teamwork, collaboration and partnership is evident. There is clarity around the roles and responsibilities of practitioners with regard to educational activities; each practitioner takes a leadership role in promoting quality learning.
- Effective strategies for professional reflection and continuous professional development are in place.
- Leaders provide a good role model for the staff and promote high standards for the work of the setting.
- Clear two-way channels of communication between the families and the setting are fostered. These include an in-depth parental handbook, parental information evenings, information letters, open days, informal daily chats, a well-stocked information wall and various electronic media connections.
- Transitions into and from the setting are managed sensitively and very effectively, ensuring continuity of experiences and progression in learning for the children.

Action advised

- Practitioners are advised to utilise the ‘Curriculum foundations’ pillar and the ‘Play’ pillar of the Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide in order to redefine the vision, mission statement and direction for the work of the service.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the service to implement the actions advised above is very good.
### Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
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<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>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

<table>
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<tr>
<th>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

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 are happy with the positive comments discussed in the report, however as an inspection is only a small snapshot of the time the children spend in preschool it was not a true reflection of everything we offer the children in our care.

The day that we were inspected was a very wet day and our outdoor resources and activities such as trikes, balance bikes, scooters, sensorial balls and vegetable garden were not observed. Furthermore interactions with animals and pets is very much a feature of this preschool. Reference was made in the report to the use of scissors and to song and movement, these activities are a daily practice in preschool. We are eager to continue to learn, grow, develop as a preschool and preschool staff team. Therefore we take on board and are currently working towards implementing the actions advised in the report.

We have revised the daily routine to ensure a balance between adult and child led activities. We are engaging with Aistear and Siolta to inform the planning of the curriculum and to further develop both the indoor and outdoor learning environments.