Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

REPORT

Naíonra Loch an Iúir
09DL0073

Coláiste na Gaeilge, Loch an Iúir
Anagaire, Leitir Ceanainn
Co Dhún na nGall

Date of inspection: 09 May 2016
CONTEXT OF SETTING

Naíonra Loch an Iúir was founded over thirty years ago to provide an early immersion education service through Irish for children. It is situated in the heart of the Gaeltacht area in the Irish college in Loch an Iúir. Two native speakers work there as practitioners and they have a great understanding of their responsibility to promote the ethos of Irish language education with the young children. The Irish language is the medium of communication in the playschool. Currently, there are 5 children in the playschool; 4 of whom participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The service operates under the aegis of Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta. 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 children’s learning and development is excellent.
- The children and parents are warmly welcomed at the beginning of the day; at the end of the session there is a short conversation between the practitioners and the parents about the morning’s activities.
- The calm atmosphere, attractive environment and positive, strong relationships between the children and the practitioners in the playschool supports progression in learning.
- The children’s social, personal and health development is supported very effectively. The practitioners consistently model positive social and behavioural skills.
- Breaks and lunch time are used to promote the children’s social development.
- The children’s understanding of themselves as individuals and as members of families and groups is successfully nurtured in a positive way.
- The playschool has developed links with the local community and communicates with the local primary school, in particular.

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

- The quality of the processes to support children’s learning and development is very good.
- Planning is organised to implement Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework on a long-term, medium-term and short-term basis.
- The practice in the playschool indicates that the child is recognised as an active agent in his/her learning. Play is the main medium through which the children learn and develop.
- The practitioners effectively use the resources and the indoor environment in the playschool for learning. The outdoor environment could be developed and used more to support the children’s skill development.
- The practitioners know the children very well and they respond to their interests and to their learning needs appropriately. High quality adult-child interactions greatly support the learning.
- Every opportunity is exploited to develop the children's language. Rhymes and music are used very naturally and very effectively to consolidate the sounds and rhythm of the language and in developing the children’s vocabulary.
- Assessment details regarding the children’s progress and learning are documented and shared with parents. Information regarding the children's learning is recorded in folders entitled ‘Our Learning Journeys’.

Actions advised
- It is advised that the environment outside be used more to support the children’s curiosity, imagination, gross motor skills and their sense of exploration.
- It is advised that the children’s strengths and new achievements are regularly documented in developing the ‘Our Learning Journeys’ folders to outline the continuity of their learning in a clearer way for parents.
AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The children show commendable levels of motivation, confidence and participation in their learning activities. They respond and interact positively with adults and with other children.
- The children play cooperatively and have opportunities to make free choices and to articulate their experiences.
- The children’s emerging language skills, and their literacy and numeracy skills are nurtured very effectively. They know a wide range of rhymes and songs. The children demonstrated understanding of the Irish language and some of them were starting to use Irish in their communication with the practitioners.

Actions advised
- It is advised that a wider range of writing tools be provided outside and inside to support pre-writing skills as the children engage in mark making on various materials.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- An ethos of professionalism, team work, cooperation and partnership is visible.
- The practitioners benefit from mentoring and other external advisory supports, when available.
- The team is open to learning and they have a great interest in developing their practice regarding Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework to benefit the children’s learning in the future.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

Staff members in the playschool show that they are committed to maintaining high standards and that they have the skills and the interest to implement the actions advised.
## Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of context to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Very 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>Excellent</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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</thead>
<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

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

In reference to the recommendations in area 2:
The centre does not have an outside yard because the service is delivered in a summer college and a long-term closed-in yard is not permitted. Currently, there is a discussion with the committee of the service to investigate if a small wall could be built that would be safe for the children, but that could be taken down for the summer when the centre functions as a summer college. This would provide an opportunity to encourage and develop the children's gross motor skills and sense of exploration in an outside setting.

In reference to the recommendations in area 3:
It is our intention to have a wide selection of pre-writing tools outside as soon as the outside space is made suitable for our children. Pencils, chalk, paint brushes, etc. are available for the pupils inside the Naionra.

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